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THE STORY OF MY LIFE

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MY FIRST PHOTOGRAPH AS QUEEN.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

BY
MARIE,
QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

VOLUME III

WITH 32 PLATES



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*My way goes straight through not round about, nor must I fear my
own strength. . . .*

LUDWIG REEG.

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Contents

VOL. III

CHAP.	PAGE
1. ROUMANIA'S NEUTRALITY	3
2. THE PASSING OF CARMEN SYLVA	12
3. THE CARES OF NEUTRALITY	22
4. THE DECISION FOR WAR	48
5. THE FIRST WAR DAYS	55
6. THE GERMAN INVASION	63
7. I LOSE MIRCEA	69
8. EVACUATION IN SIGHT	77
9. FLIGHT TO JASSY	87
10. AT HEAD-QUARTERS	96
11. DIFFICULTIES, MILITARY AND POLITICAL	103
12. DISASTROUS DAYS	115
13. DISEASE, DISORDER AND INTRIGUE	127
14. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION	150
15. THE TYPHUS TERROR	158
16. THE GHASTLINESS OF WAR	173
17. SPRINGTIME HOPES AND SUMMER FEARS	189
18. THE RUSSIAN DEBACLE	205
19. WORK AT THE FRONT	227
20. STRENUOUS DAYS	249
21. HOPING AGAINST HOPE	274
22. THE AGONY OF DESPAIR	288
23. THE OPENING OF 1918	305

CHAP.	PAGE
24. BETRAYAL	317
25. OUR INFAMOUS PEACE	330
26. DEFEATED BUT NOT SUBDUED	346
27. DAYS OF DESPAIR	365
28. PEACEFUL INTERLUDE	377
29. THE TURN OF THE TIDE	388
30. DIRE TRAGEDY: "ROMÂNIA MARE"	414
INDEX	447

List of Plates

MY FIRST PHOTOGRAPH AS QUEEN	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
AS I LOOKED AT FORTY	7
WITH MY BORZOIS AT SINAIA	11
MY CHILDREN WERE OFTEN AT CURTEA DE ARGES	18
ILEANA	22
ION BRATIANU	39
HOW I RODE IN ROUMANIAN DRESS	54
MIRCEA	71
NICKY AND ILEANA	86
THE KING AND THE CROWN PRINCE ON THE FRONT	103
GENERAL BERTHELOT	118
THE KING DECORATING SOME OF OUR MEN	151
MY WHITE RED CROSS DRESS HAD BECOME A SYMBOL	166
GENERAL BERTHELOT AND GENERAL AVERESCU	183
CAROL AND ILEANA	198
MY FAVOURITE THOROUGHBRED, GRUI SÂNGER.	203
GENERAL AVERESCU AND COLONEL BALLIF	210
WITH GENERAL GRIGORESCU DURING THE BATTLE OF MĂRĂȘEȘTI	221
THE KING AND I AMONGST OUR TROOPS NEAR OITUȚI	224
VISITING POOR HOSPITALS ON THE FRONT WITH COLONEL ANDERSON	231
READING TO A WOUNDED OFFICER IN ONE OF OUR COTÔFĂNEȘTI WARDS	246
REST IN A MAIZE-FIELD TALKING TO ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS	279
WITH SOME OF MY HUMBLE FRIENDS	294

	FACING PAGE
WITH GENERAL GRIGORESCU WHERE WE HAD STOOD TOGETHER DURING THE BATTLE OF MĂRĂȘEȘTI	313
THE MOST TRAGIC OF PICTURES : THE TSAR IN HIS OWN GARDEN GUARDED BY THREE BOLSHEVIK SOLDIERS	324
TYPICAL OLD PEASANT OF THE BISTRIȚA VALLEY	359
COLONEL BOYLE WITH A SPECIAL PROTÉGÉE WHOSE ROOF WE RE- PAIRED	374
"THE SAINT OF THE FOUR WINDS"	379
MIGNON RIDING LIKE OUR PEASANT WOMEN	386
ON THE BALCONY OF THE BICAZ HOUSE	395
ONE OF MY OLD WITCHES	402
KING FERDINAND	422

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Part Five
THE WAR YEARS

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Chapter I

ROUMANIA'S NEUTRALITY

THE last chapter of the second volume of my reminiscences ended with the day when my husband came to the throne, and when we stood side by side in Parliament facing our people.

I described that hour in words written at the time, so as to lose nothing of the intensity of emotion felt on that supreme occasion.

Many years, and years which count double, lie between then and now, and so many events have weighted those years that to-day I should never have been able to find words vibrant enough with which to recapture that tremendous emotion.

I stood then on the brink of a new life; enormous possibilities opened out before me, but a thick veil hid the future from us. What would it bring? Glory, honour, success, or tragedy and humiliation? Which?

Roumania and I: a solemn hour. Had strength really come to me as I imagined, should I be equal to my task, was the thrill I felt shuddering through me in anticipation of what was coming, a good omen? Roumania and I—what were we to mean to each other now that I stood on my own feet, facing my own responsibilities? The old King was no longer there to counsel, advise and admonish, to show the way: now it depended upon us, we were to have the reins in our hands. Should we be strong enough to take upon ourselves such a heritage at an hour when the whole world was aflame? The future alone could answer these questions.

In this third part of my life story I am going to try and tell what came to me after that first great emotion; how Fate treated us and in what way I was to put to the test

my English origin and the education Mamma, and later Uncle and Auntie, had given me. It is not a very long story: it only covers four years, but years which count double, years overflowing with events and people, so overflowing that I approach with a certain anxiety the self-imposed task of telling it all as it was.

This third part will deviate somewhat in style from the first two, as much of it will be quoted from the diary I kept ever since we entered the war.

With a never-flagging persistency at which I cannot help marvelling to-day, I wrote everything down, almost from hour to hour. It all lies here before me, an overwhelming accumulation of documents, each page bearing its date and each day described with all the emotion of the time, with its exaggerations, its fears and hopes: passionate pages in which I read myself with all the ups and downs of my every mood.

The difficulty is selection. I must not lose the thread of my story. Each page is so alive with the events of the day that they all seem to need to be quoted, but I shall pick out those most character-revealing, those which best express the stress of the times. I hope I shall succeed in putting the story together in a way that will make good reading, avoiding as much as possible those repetitions so natural to diaries.

But before I start upon this part of my tale, I must speak of the two years of neutrality lived through before Roumania entered the war, but of them, alas, I have no record written at the time.

A Liberal Government under Ion Bratianu was in power when the old King died. According to correct traditions Bratianu, as Prime Minister, tendered his and the Government's resignation, which King Ferdinand did not accept: so it was hand in hand with the Liberals that the new reign began.

My husband and I decided to make as few changes as possible in the royal household, so that the shock of passing from one regime to another should not be too painfully felt. We respected our predecessor's old servants and faithful

followers, even those who had made things hard for us in the days of our youth.

King Ferdinand was the kindest of souls and was always ready to listen to feminine pleadings when I tried to prevent any unkindness or even justified retaliation. I was never for revenge: I would rather make a friend of my enemy. Power in itself wields almost unfair privileges and these, according to my conceptions, must never be misused, especially not on the side of harshness or anything which could in the least resemble spite. I would much rather heap coals of fire on my enemy's head than do him a bad turn; I am afraid I am not one of those who are in favour of "an eye for an eye." It is so sad to become suddenly "the past," and I did everything I could not to accentuate "the new master" attitude, so irresistible to many.

I am perfectly aware that it has been proclaimed in every way that I swayed King Ferdinand's will, and that, being inordinately ambitious, I liked to rule and dominate. This has been declared both in praise and disparagement, and generally I smiled, "for things are not as they seem."

Going deep down into my own conscience, honestly, I cannot recognize in myself any deliberate intention or desire to dominate. I certainly felt a certain irritation at the indecision of others: woman-like I jumped to conclusions, and always seemed to have my wits about me, feeling extraordinarily alert and ready to grasp any situation. Having an open and receptive mind, I was easy to talk to and to get on with, so people were not afraid of me. I never shunned an argument, debate did not alarm me, difficult encounters put me on my mettle: at all hours of the day I felt almost electrically alive.

This my husband knew, and he knew also that my arguments were generally incisive and to the point; I was always ready for any fray, so little by little he had adopted the habit of turning to me when perplexed. He often found in me a safe adviser and one who, for a woman, could be strangely impersonal.

King Ferdinand was of a retiring disposition, not fond of asserting himself; he was also somewhat slow when he had to make up his mind, whilst there was no hesitancy in

my nature. Difficulties only seemed to redouble my energy, and there was a healthy buoyancy about me, sustained by an uncrushable sense of humour which could ease the tensest atmosphere, and these peculiarities of his life-companion were useful to one who was seldom in high spirits. Owing to having been too long subjugated and oppressed, King Ferdinand needed to be continually stimulated and upheld; my attitude gave him courage and hope. In the hour of doubt he found in me a steel-like assurance which he did not find in himself. Hand in hand we were strongest; life did not appal me, for I had about me something of the joyful warrior who never shuns a fight.

It was not my husband's way to recognize me openly as a collaborator, he was not light-hearted enough. Besides, as a German, he was a staunch upholder of the Salic law, and to admit a woman would have been against his dearest traditions. But he depended upon me, I was the joyful companion, occasionally unruly, but one who would never let him down. Besides, our task as well as our goal were the same, and we both lived for the same ideal—the good of our country. This made us patient with each other and tolerant towards mutual imperfections.

That I was gradually forced into taking my part in events was not a case of petty personal ambition or a selfish desire to put myself forward, but we were living in difficult times, work was strenuous, all hands and brains were needed, all men were called upon to give their best, and in my own impulsive, uncalculating way I had much to give. So when there was need, I quite simply stepped in: not because I wanted to monopolize undue rights, but because it all came in the day's work, by sheer force of necessity. It was a logical consequence of the situation and of those obliged to meet it as best they could, each man bravely doing his share.

With me nothing was ever calculated; on the contrary, I was dangerously rash and took almost deadly risks. I never prepared safe retreats for myself. I was always ready to stand or fall by my convictions. There was nothing of the wily diplomat about me, but much of the brave soldier. I am, and always was, moved by an irresistible instinct to give, without ever pausing to consider whether my over-



quick actions were wise or not, or if they would lay me open to unfavourable criticism or to being misunderstood.

Spontaneous generosity is the key to my being ; I am obliged to say this of myself because it best explains my every action and my attitude all through King Ferdinand's reign.

But now enough about myself.

The new King's task was a particularly difficult one, especially in all that concerned foreign politics. Convinced that he must stick to neutrality as long as possible, he was nevertheless being continually coerced by both belligerent parties, threatened and tempted by turns. Endless offers were held out, but under each lay a steel-clad fist ever ready either to strike or grasp.

But above all, there was that cruel conflict between duty, conscience and heart. Quite naturally his sympathies drew him towards the country of his birth. Besides, there was also the enormous belief in the invincibility of the German army : as it had been with his uncle, he simply could not conceive of its defeat. It can therefore easily be imagined how torn in two he was, and with what anxiety his people watched him, wondering how he would live up to the promise he had made when he came to the throne of " becoming a good Roumanian."

My part was particularly delicate. Although my instinctive sympathies lay elsewhere, I felt deeply the conflict of soul he was enduring. Besides, I too had many a tie with Germany, not easily broken. It was pain whichever way we turned, and yet I knew the pulse of the country, knew that the cruel sacrifice would finally be asked of him, and it was my duty to lead him gradually up to accepting the inevitable. I alone could do this, but it had to be done with tremendous tact. I had to be something of a " soul doctor," to prepare him little by little, to strengthen his will, to uphold his spirit, to smooth the way, but this was only possible by being on guard continually, ever watchful and prepared for every danger.

I cannot explain exactly how it was done, but during these difficult two years Prince Stirbey was an invaluable

help. He kept me informed of every fluctuation of public opinion, of every move or effort on the enemy's side: he kept, so to say, outward guard, whilst I stood by the King day by day, almost hour by hour. All my love and understanding of his character, of his upright, duty-loving, but also timid, nature, was necessary so as to help him overcome the nightmare he had before him. He had to be convinced that there was no other way, that it was Fate, merciless Fate. But at the same time his soul had to be saved from despair.

The immense trust and belief he had in me and in my sane judgment in spite of the disparity of our two characters, was of course my greatest asset. From the beginning, even when I was young and foolish, he always instinctively turned for help to my strong will and never-flagging self-confidence.

I have had more than one difficult task in life, but this, of all, was perhaps the most excruciatingly delicate.

An added difficulty was that although nine-tenths of the country were for the Allies, there remained a small fraction which believed that our salvation lay on the side of the Central Powers, and amongst these were some of my husband's most trusted friends, headed by Peter Carp, for whom both he and I had a special sympathy.

These were, of course, the channels through which contrary propaganda was brought to him, and I was quite aware of what I was up against.

What gave me the courage of my convictions it is not easy to say. I think two things above all upheld me—my unshakable belief in England, and the completeness with which I had espoused the national ideal of unity of all the Roumanians, that age-old dream and ambition dear to every Roumanian heart. It had become my goal, as well as my people's.

The Central Powers, quite rightly, saw in me the kernel of resistance to their propaganda. I was the greatest danger to their cause and became, therefore, the chief object of their attacks either open or covert.

When receiving a German or an Austrian I felt how they had prepared all their batteries and how when they crossed the threshold of my room, they knew themselves to be face to face with their most dangerous opponent.

This, of course, put me on my mettle, and steeled my nerves for the most difficult encounters.

One of these encounters remains most vividly imprinted upon my memory, and it took place towards the end of 1915. It was an interview with Count Ottokar Czernin, then Austro-Hungarian Minister in Bucarest.

Count Czernin had been a personal friend of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who in his day had been considered friendly to Roumania, and this was one of the chief reasons why Czernin had been chosen to go to Roumania at this crisis. Besides, he was a pleasant man, tall, fair, aristocratic-looking, with agreeable manners, although occasionally supercilious and displaying a certain arrogance not always easy to stand.

He had probably been warned that I was the chief enemy, and I can well imagine that it had been impressed upon him how important it was that I should be won or coerced over to their side by fair means or foul.

Czernin was not unsympathetic to me, for I always got on well with Austrians, their manners were pleasant and easy. Besides, I had been good friends, with his younger brother, Otto, so although on my guard, I had no feeling against him, whilst I frankly disliked Herr von dem Busche, his German colleague.

Whenever I met Czernin he went out of his way to make himself agreeable, and I soon noticed that he was doing all he could to attract my sympathy, using all his personal charm, of which he had plenty when he dropped his arrogant attitude; only once were we to face each other as man to man, and this was to be a real crossing of swords.

He asked for an audience, and I received him alone, inviting him to a cup of tea in my own private room. At first he was nothing but the refined and agreeable *homme du monde*, eager to please a lady, talking only upon indifferent topics. Gradually, however, he led up to the burning subject, and suddenly there we were, up against each other, with a clash of arms.

A harrowing scene ensued, during which Czernin used all his batteries. He began by declaring that the fate of Roumania lay in my hands. It was no good protesting or

trying to persuade him that the contrary was the case ; with me alone—this he knew for certain—lay the last word ; Roumania would act according to my decree. It was well known that the King listened to my advice, it would be according to my judgment that he would act. He, Czernin, was my friend and admirer : therefore he had come to me at this supreme hour to open my eyes before it was too late.

Now was the moment for Roumania to ally herself with the Central Powers, whilst their troops were everywhere victorious. Had I considered what a fearful responsibility I was taking upon my self by pushing Roumania towards the side of the Allies ? Perhaps I counted upon Austria-Hungary falling to pieces ? This might come about one day, but not now, and this was the very last chance Roumania would be given to come in on the winning side. If to-day I would put in my word so that Roumania would go with them I should ever afterwards be blessed by my people, whilst, if I turned down his appeal, I should be handing Roumania over to everlasting perdition.

It was the supreme moment : to-morrow would be too late. It all lay with me, and how could I dare to take upon myself the overwhelming responsibility of siding with the Allies now that their situation was becoming daily more precarious ? He used every argument in his power to persuade me that Roumania *must* throw in her lot with the Austrians and Germans. He pleaded, he threatened and flattered, he warned and coerced, he tortured me in every possible way, making me go through hell. He made promises, dangled victory and triumph before my eyes, he played the adviser, the accuser, the tempter ; he conjured up a brilliant future before me, in which I was to play a predominant part, declaring that, if I would do this, the thing that I ought to do, I should become the greatest figure in Roumanian history.

Yes, he pleaded well, he played upon my every nerve, my every emotion till finally he even made me weep, but I could only shake my head sadly.

“You torture me,” I said, “you tear my heart and loyalty to pieces. You say that it is my word which can be decisive. I do not know if this is true, but I *do* know



WITH MY BORZOIS AT SINAIA.

that I cannot act otherwise than as I am doing. Nothing can shake me. I share Roumania's great dream, and I believe in the dictum that England always wins the last battle. It is no good trying to shake my convictions; I have no ill-feeling for anyone, I consider no man my foe, but all the same I should die of grief if Roumania were to go to war against England. . . ."

And thereupon we parted, not enemies, but both of us deeply distressed.

Herr von dem Busche, on the contrary, was never able to gain my sympathy. He failed entirely as a psychologist.

He too had been told that I was the one who must be won over, and asked to see me in private. After having entertained me upon several subjects, rather in the style of a very patronizing schoolmaster, he casually put his hand into his pocket and pulled from it a packet of dumdum bullets :

"Would Your Majesty like to see the sort of bullets the English use against the Germans?"

I simply got up and turned my back upon him; it was not with that sort of story that he could win me over to his side.

Chapter II

THE PASSING OF CARMEN SYLVA

I ALWAYS look upon it as one of the great mercies of Fate that dear old Carmen Sylva died before Roumania entered the war. It would have been terrible for her and also for us had she lived to see this cruel day, and it would have made King Ferdinand's task doubly difficult. But she was mercifully called to rest in the early spring of 1915, a little more than a year after King Carol's death.

We were granted over twelve months in which we were still allowed to show old Aunty all our love and affection. Both my husband and I considered it our pride and our duty to treat her with every honour, and to surround her with everything her heart could desire.

Accustomed during a long life of abnegation to be dominated and overruled by her strong-willed lord and master, her newly gained independence somewhat bewildered her. With the death of her husband, she found herself the possessor of a considerable fortune, she, who had never had any money of her own. The marvellous miracle had suddenly come to pass and her hands were full: at last she was able to give according to the generosity of her heart.

But like a child stepping suddenly from a dark passage into dazzling sunlight, this unexpected abundance somewhat perplexed her. As so often happens in life, both fortune and freedom had come too late; to-day she had no use for her sudden liberty. Her impetus was gone, her eyes dim, her hands tired, and although still occasionally vivid, her imagination had broken wings. So she clung to us, the younger generation, allowing us to plan and think for her, and we were gentle masters, making all things easy for her weary soul.

I in particular was keen to demonstrate to her, as well as to others who for many years had been onlookers, that the trouble we had had together was not of my making. The moment power passed into my hands and the ordering about fell to my share, all quite naturally became peace and good-will; no more intrigues and never a harsh or ungracious word, only kindness and harmony, and pleasant understanding.

Even the "Chief Inquisitor" laid down her weapons, and true to my principles, I did not pay her back in kind; it was hard enough for her to have to kiss her victim's hand. So far as I was concerned, she as much as anyone else had her right to her corner "beneath the face of the sun."

Before leaving Aunty for ever I want to paint a last picture of her such as she would like to be remembered, for she often spoke of herself as I am now going to describe her.

She is at Curtea de Arges, in the big hall of the Episcopal Palace, where she had taken up her residence for several months "to be as near as possible to her husband's grave."

She is seated in a carved arm-chair near a large fire which burns upon an open hearth. Beyond the window lies the beautiful church, all white, golden, turquoise and green, the sanctuary chosen by King Carol for his last resting-place.

Smothered in yards and yards of black crape, Queen Elisabeth is an imposing figure, quite the classical widow, adapting herself to this new part with the thoroughness always found in her different incarnations all through life.

Her teeth are still magnificent, her back unbent, her eyes, though deeply sunken and almost blind, still compelling and piercingly blue; her hand still holds the tatting shuttle, and whilst with graceful gestures she moves it hither and thither, she continues to talk and talk, endlessly relating those many things already told too often and too often listened to by those who have shared her life. She tells of her hopes, of her ideals, of her illusions and disillusionments with that never-flagging desire to share her thoughts with anyone who is ready to listen.

Her language is as coloured, high-flown and poetical as

ever; nothing damps her enthusiasm, and she is as ready as in her youth to build castles in the air, quite indifferent if they are shattered against the sceptical indifference of her listeners. When the walls crumble, she bravely begins to build anew, and their towers mount higher and higher, as is the way with buildings existing only in imagination, and which need neither brick nor mortar.

On the other side of the hearth, in a chair, twin to her own, sits the Bishop of Curtea de Arges. He, too, is a voluminous and imposing figure draped in black, his beard lies like frost upon his cassock; with folded hands he reverently listens to everything the Queen has to say, from time to time nodding his head as though in approval, whilst the flames send sudden bursts of light over his handsome old face.

His expression is a mixture of respect and non-comprehension, for indeed it is not easy to understand Carmen Sylva's flights of thought. But she does not particularly expect to be understood, she only needs an audience, someone to occupy the seat on the other side of the fire, and the handsome, white-bearded bishop, with the cross on his breast, fits beautifully into her widowed atmosphere.

The world is still a stage to the Poet Queen, and the sable-clad priest, enlightened or otherwise, is precisely the one touch needed to complete a perfect picture.

My children were often with Aunty at Curtea de Arges, especially Elisabetta, who was always the great favourite.

To the very last day of her life, the old Queen never ceased planning all the good she meant to do, still the valiant defender and upholder of the outcast, the desolate, the forsaken. It was much the same as it had been the first time we had met so many years ago at Segenhaus, when Carmen Sylva was suddenly revealed to me with her weird following of blind, lame, deaf and dumb and those poor of spirit. For as she used to say herself: "We really change very little all through the days of our life. . . ."

Carmen Sylva died of inflammation of the lungs caught because of her too great liking for fresh air and draughts.

I was with her during the last night of her life. She died at dawn, one hand in mine, the other clasping the bony

fingers of the very old maid with whom she had breasted the many storms of life.

We buried Aunty beside her life-companion at Curtea de Arges in the lovely white, golden and turquoise-coloured church she had so lovingly gazed at whilst seated by her hearth opposite the portly white-bearded bishop with the cross on his breast.

We had faithfully remembered her wishes, so often expressed in her moments of enthusiasm. Georges Enescu had transcribed for orchestra a certain Haydn quartet particularly loved by her, and she had always desired that it be played at her funeral: "Mein letztes Quartette."

We considered it our sacred duty to carry out everything as she had wished it, nor did we allow ourselves the luxury of many tears, for Aunty had always impressed upon us that we must consider her death as a day of rejoicing, a day of deliverance, the casting off of the irksome chains of the flesh so as to enter lightly into a land of light and song.

Her funeral was very much a repetition of Uncle's funeral a year and a quarter before, except that being a Protestant, the church ceremonies were less complicated. At Uncle's funeral we had spent countless hours at Roumanian and Catholic prayers, as both the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches claimed the honour and the right of burying the old monarch.

Having died at Sinaia, he had to be brought back solemnly to his capital, Sinaia skies crying over him as he was driven for the last time away from the mountain home which had been his pride and joy. At Bucarest he lay for several days in state, whilst his people passed in thousands before his bier, so as to have a last look at the old sovereign who had led them wisely for over forty years.

Finally he was brought to Curtea de Arges, and as on the way from Sinaia to Bucarest, enormous crowds assembled at every station to pay him the last honours, whilst the priests of each parish chanted prayers over his coffin upon which, on the tricolour flag, lay his austere crown of steel. Unlike the day at Sinaia, this was a wonderful October morning, and I particularly remember the beauty of the

Curtea de Arges church, standing in brilliant sunshine against a superb wooded background of russet, golden and scarlet leaves, and in the distance a faint line of smoke-blue hills.

We, the women of the family, stood on the church platform awaiting the funeral procession, the solemn strains of music heralding the approach long before anything could be seen. There appeared first all the flags of every regiment in the country, a grand parade of sacred tattered banners, followed by an endless file of priests in gorgeous vestments grouped according to colour, red, violet, golden, blue, green, silver; many uniforms, many soldiers, crowds of white-shirted peasants. But no foreign princes or deputations followed his coffin, for the whole world being at war, the princes of every country were scattered about fighting on the different battle-fields of Europe. So old King Carol's was purely a national funeral and Roumania greatly mourned its wise and venerable King.

Aunt's funeral was very much a repetition of Uncle's, with less military display, but with the same honours.

I for one, sincerely mourned for the fine old lady whom we had laid to rest. She had been a great personality, and with her a whole epoch went to the grave. She was a unique figure—Carmen Sylva: the Poet Queen.

Her absurdly magnificent romanticism, her grand amiability, her large, generous heart and wide-sweeping gestures of welcome, which made me declare that she felt like Mother Earth embracing humanity. Her everlasting illusions and exaggerations, her never-to-be-damped enthusiasms which, like volcanic eruptions, would shoot sky-high when least expected. Her splendid belief in the impossible, her stupendous faculty for seeing things as they were not, her melodious voice continually relating all her manifold emotions with that superb and disconcerting disregard of her audience, which so often filled me with acute dismay.

Aunt, large, elemental like a river in flood, pacing her rooms with restless tread; her contempt for prosaic measures, her unconscious magnifying and distorting of everyday events, her winged imagination and complete want of taste; her sense of fun and yet lack of humour. Her kindly intelligence, her ardent impulse for charity and good-will towards

all men, but her passions that were too strong, her resentments too primitive and virile to make forgiveness one of her chief virtues.

Intense, vibrant, *exaltée*, exaggerated both in love and resentment, a mighty nature, with a small curiously childish side, which often made her almost pathetically human, whilst she considered herself "*ein Übermensch*," a dreamer of dreams, an ardent matchmaker, over-confident, over-credulous, easily deceived, kind, charitable, altruistic, but with something almost animal about her when her depths were sounded and her passions roused.

Although because of our very different tastes and conceptions of things, I was never very intimate with her nor a member of her "inner circle," I think that few understood Auntie as well as I did. I was of her caste, I had the same difficulties to face, in the same milieu, with the same people: I had to make the same sacrifices, like her I had to crush all personal desire, and to advance upon the same thorny road.

We were vastly different, our sense of values was not the same, but there was a bigness about our two natures, a fine indifference to exteriors and strict conventionalities which was a link strongly felt at those moments when masks were laid aside and only essentials counted; I understood her when others could not and there were times when I felt a flaming desire to defend her against the non-comprehension of those about her. Her bigness was misunderstood: just at the moments when she was most absurd, she was often most sublime.

Before I leave her once and for all, I cannot resist recalling certain memories of her because she is indeed a figure our modern world knows no more, *La grande Romantique*, and at the same time something of the *schwärmerische Backfisch*, too fond of *Vergissmeinnicht*.

"Oh, darling, come quickly, I have something to show you!" and tripping over her too long robes, over-decorated with tasteless trimmings, she pushes me before her into a wee, dark little corner, turns up the light, and I find myself in a queer little alcove all hung with lace. Lace dangles from the ceiling, there is lace on the walls, lace on

the tables, couches and chairs, lace, lace, everywhere lace, good, bad, precious, tawdry, lace of every kind, of every sort of thread.

"Mein Spitzenparadies!" says Auntie, and there is a rapt expression of enchantment on her face.

And into this absurd retreat, all dripping with lace, the enthusiastic Queen would gather a numerous company of enormously stout ladies, all crushed up together with an artificial pink light pouring down on their heads.

Auntie had an irrational predilection quite out of keeping with her size, for tiny corners, a sort of throw-back to her childhood, I suppose, and into these nooks she liked to crush all those then specially in favour, no matter what their size, shape, age or disparity. On chairs, cushions, couches, even on the floor they were gathered, as close up as possible, and they all had to be tense, eager, expectant, and enthusiastic about the topic of the day, be it Auntie's latest poetry, her latest tatting pattern, the last page painted for her Bible, the marvellous voice of the porter's son, or the incredible literary talent of her maid's niece. Everything was in the superlative, a stupendous discovery, a God-given miracle suddenly fallen from heaven down upon earth.

Auntie also talked to the Archangels, especially with Raphael, and towards the end of her life all the wise words she spoke and all the advice she gave us were, we were told, direct messages from this luminous being who had, with the aid of a very dark-eyed lady, whom none but Carmen Sylva trusted, special charge over Auntie and the welfare of Roumania.

And while her golden voice raved about this or that, the draperies of the *Spitzenparadies* swung and billowed about the heads and shoulders of the stout ladies who, boxed up together in an uncomfortable and unhygienic proximity, listened in awed silence to all the Queen had to say.

Yet in spite of this, Auntie always sang of the beauty of solitude and of the awesome stillness and grandeur of mountain, forest and plain. Great indeed is a poet's imaginative faculty!

"Oh, children, just listen, I have had such a marvellous inspiration!" (This was after the old King's death and



MY CHILDREN WERE OFTEN AT CURTEA DE ARGES
(WITH "CARMEN SYLVA").

Aunty had taken hold of both my husband's and my hands.)
"Just listen. I have discovered such a wonderful woman!"

"Who is it, Aunty?"

"Oh, it's a pedagogue, a woman of extraordinary talent, marvellously suited to educate children."

"Where did you meet her, Aunty?"

"I haven't met her, I have neither seen nor heard her, but Madame C—— told me about her; she is a treasure I must not lose. I must secure this rare person to run my Curtea de Arges orphanage!"

Nando looked blank, but Aunty continued eagerly:
"Yes, yes, you know the orphanage I mean to build at Curtea de Arges?"

"Oh, yes, of course, the town gave you a piece of ground?"

"Yes, they have promised to give me the ground, only I have not got it yet."

"And the money for building, Aunty?"

"Oh, the money! Why worry about the money? You know I never worried about money—money can always be found somewhere; where there is a will there is a way!"

I noticed that my husband was getting a little nervous, for he knew something of the way in which Uncle had occasionally become uncomfortably entangled in Aunty's charities, and he hazarded somewhat timidly: "Is it not rather early to engage a schoolmistress before the school exists?"

"Oh, no, not at all. I could not think of losing this remarkable woman, although there is just one little complication because the husband does not want his wife to give up the post she occupies, so I've decided that I shall also pay him a monthly salary; it is quite simple and I'm so glad Madame C—— told me about this unique woman."

Such was Aunty when enthusiasm moved her. She truly imagined she was making an excellent and advantageous bargain, and yet she had not even ever seen the lady in question!

And here is a last quaint little picture of the white-haired Poet Queen:

We are at Sinaia and it is Elisabetta's eleventh birthday and Aunty has had a wonderful idea! There has been a lot of mysterious whispering with her old maid, and Aunty's smiles are full of promise. She orders the open victoria with her four little Norwegian ponies so as to drive in full state from her house to ours; the day is beautifully sunny and Aunty is all dressed in white. Pitter-patter go the horses' hoofs on the hard road, and hurriedly the guard turns out with a clatter of guns and a flourish of bugles; Aunty graciously bows to the soldiers, and with a wide sweep, carriage and four draw up before our front door.

Eager servants, the scamper of children's feet. "Hurry up! Lisabetta, where are you? Here's Aunty, quick, Lisabetta, quick!"

Aunty descends from her carriage, her smile is a beaming light, her arms are outstretched in that welcoming gesture we all know so well, and suddenly we see that Aunty's white dress is decorated over and over with silk butterflies of many colours and of every size. Butterflies!

Elisabetta comes running down the stairs and close on her heels comes also Mignon, both of them in their best birthday attire. Carol has already received Aunty on the threshold.

"Well, my darlings, look at Aunty!"

Shyly the children stare at the delighted old lady in her flowing white robe and streaming lace veil, and there she stands, one bewildering mass of coloured silk butterflies, her sweeping gown and veil all covered with them!

"Now, my sweet pets, you must pluck the butterflies off Aunty and pin them all over your own dresses: it will look so pretty, so charming, isn't it a perfect idea!"

And Elisabetta, with compressed lips, heroically trying to overcome her shyness, approaches Aunty with diffidence: and, although she would much rather sink into the ground, because Elisabetta at eleven sees the world with much more rational eyes than Carmen Sylva at seventy, dutifully begins to detach those absurd butterflies and to transfer them to her own dress. She hates doing this, it makes her feel a fool: besides, this abnormal form of decoration quite spoils the look of her nice white dress. But Aunty is in such a

state of excited delight that it would have been like disappointing a child not to pretend at least to be as pleased as she is.

Luckily little Mignon is genuinely enchanted, and manages to stick butterflies even into the thick strands of her fair hair. She floats hither and thither, herself a butterfly, responding as she should to Aunty's idea of a treat. But Elisabetta watches her sister with a certain contempt and wishes that Aunty had not such funny ideas : she feels utterly miserable stuck over and over with those silly, gaudy insects so entirely out of keeping with the dignity of her eleven years. But years mean nothing to Carmen Sylva ! She certainly does not see the world "through a glass darkly" but sees all things according to the light of her poetical imagination. Blessed be her memory !

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Chapter III

THE CARES OF NEUTRALITY

OUR life during those two years of neutrality was somewhat hectic. Events were crowding in upon us with a torrent of contradictory news from all sides, and as is the way with humans, each man believed, or tried to believe, that which was most dear to his heart.

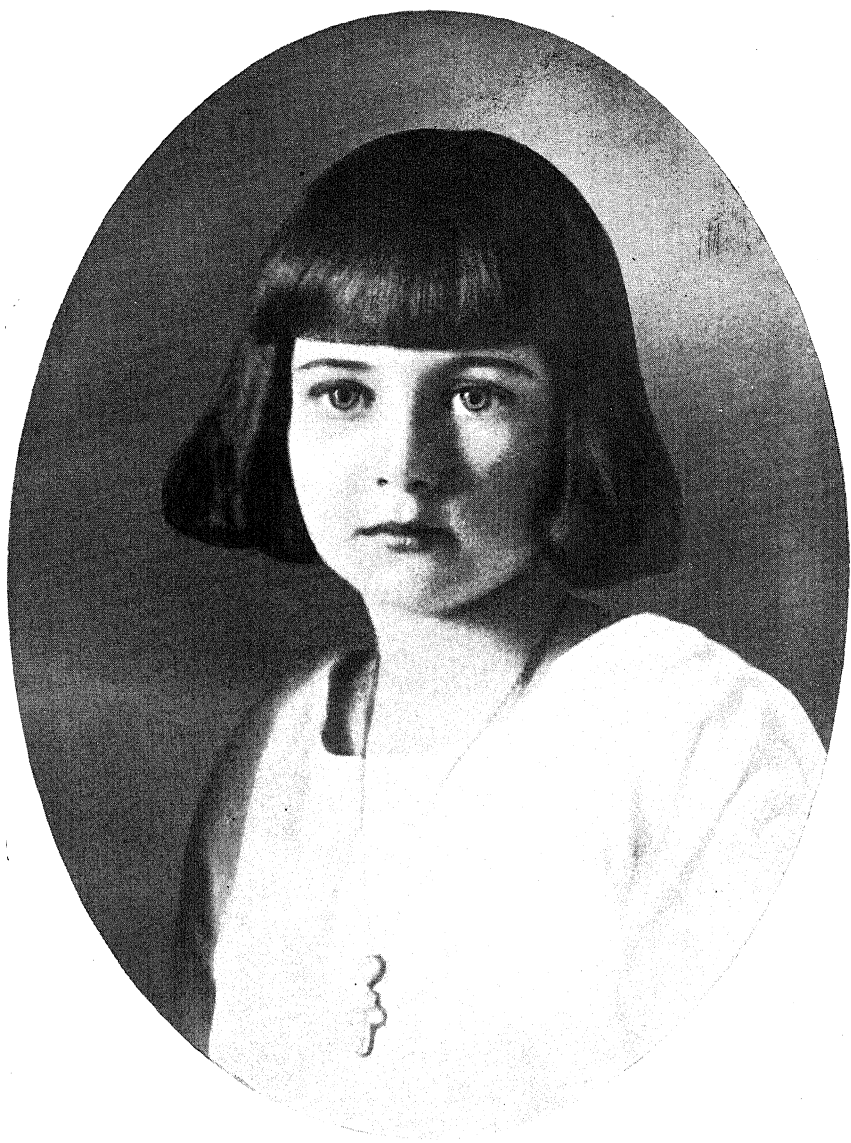
I was still in touch with Mamma in Germany and with Ducky in Russia. Not yet being at war, my aid was asked from all parts for transmitting letters, for helping prisoners, for searching for those who had disappeared, and so on. My days were over-full, but I had efficient help.

When I became Queen there was so much work to do that one single lady-in-waiting could no longer suffice, so I chose three more—Madame Irène Procopiu, Madame Simone Lahovary, whom we called “Simky,” and Madame Constance Cincu—whilst Madame Hélène Mavrodi, who had been with me for several years, became Grande Maîtresse.

I also asked that my husband should detach one of his A.D.C.s for my personal service. I had to go about a great deal and needed a trustworthy follower, and times being war-like, I preferred to have an officer rather than a civilian, and it was thus that it became an accepted privilege that I should have my own A.D.C.

I chose Colonel Ballif, a somewhat austere and unbending, but entirely competent and reliable cavalry officer, and this was indeed an excellent choice, as the coming years were to prove.

The only member of the family who came to see us during these two years of neutrality was my brother-in-law, Prince Ernie Hohenlohe, Sandra's husband, who was on his way to Constantinople, where he was to take the Ambassador's place for a while.



ILEANA.

Ernie was our first direct contact with the German belligerent side. I was hungry for news of everybody and everything at Coburg, and yet it was a difficult encounter, as Ernie sensed which way the tide was turning; and I well knew that his contact with Nando was not without danger. Ernie represented too evidently that German atmosphere dear and familiar to my husband, and it was but natural that Ernie should profit by his visit to further German interests; besides, Ernie was a very sympathetic German agent.

Nando and I could not indulge in real summer holidays. The children were at Sinaia, but we had to spend most of our time at Cotroceni, and town was not pleasant during the great heat. I remember vividly the relief it was to get up to Sinaia occasionally, and how much we then enjoyed the wonderful mountain air and the children's company.

Mircea had become such a delightful little fellow. He and Ileana adored each other, but he was not an easy child to manage, and often perplexed Woodfield, his English nurse, whom the children called "Nini." She was at her wits' end to know what to do with the unruly, stubborn little man, but Ileana had a wonderful influence over him; both Ileana and Mignon had exceedingly motherly natures.

Although it was necessary that I should remain with the King as much as possible, I was, all the same, asked to travel about through different parts of the country to distribute amongst the poor a large sum of money given by the King when he came to the throne. I was very glad and very proud that I was the one chosen for this work, especially as I was eager to get into close contact with my subjects.

Amongst our Liberal ministers there was one, Alecco Constantinescu, a man of outstanding capability, who had instituted an excellent organization for looking after the families of those who were called (because of threatening times) to do military service beyond their usual time; and it was with the aid of this organization that the money was to be distributed.

Constantinescu was a buoyant personality. Small, portly, jovial and sly, he was eminently efficient, and self-assured

to an infectious degree. To Alecco Constantinescu all things seemed possible, also those not usually considered absolutely correct. With a knowing wink of his eye he was always ready to smooth out any complications. By his enemies he was accused of more than one misdeed, but from a practical point of view his qualities far outweighed his faults, as he had a masterful way of overcoming difficulties and finding solutions to the most complicated situations. Nothing appalled this rotund gentleman, who was also a priceless appeaser of conflicts and an admirable negotiator between troublesome opponents. He was a delightful and amusing travelling companion, and a splendid organizer; he loved his ease, good food and good cheer and had a glorious way of ignoring the unpleasant sides of life.

My daughters and I thoroughly enjoyed these small journeys, during which we came to many places seldom visited. We were everywhere most enthusiastically received and these many wanderings amongst my people were precious to me. I came to distant villages not often reached, and into contact with a great part of the population living far away from high roads.

In those days all things were emotional. Knowing that most certainly a terrible struggle and terrible suffering would be ours in the near future, I was really like the mother of an enormous family, foreseeing overwhelming events of which they were still mercifully ignorant. It gave a special quality to those visits and established a sentimental link between us which coming struggles were greatly to strengthen.

This same quality of febrile emotion ran also through the difficult days I shared with the King.

Our country had become almost painfully precious to us, its future was our constant preoccupation, and as time advanced we became more and more aware that our neutrality could not be everlasting.

Personally I loathed neutrality; it was like walking on eggs, and entirely out of keeping with my character. I detested having to be eternally secretive and diplomatic, I always hated all pretence and shilly-shallying. Neutrality obliged us to be careful of every word we said, of every

opinion we expressed. We were no one's declared enemy, but certainly we were no one's friend.

War is cruel, hideous, awful, but it promotes heroism, whilst neutrality demoralizes a country. The way it is tempted, flattered, coerced and pandered to from every side fosters a people's greed and awakens its lower appetites.

At the end of January, 1915, King Ferdinand wrote a personal letter to the German Emperor, in which he explained the cruel situation in which he found himself and how, in spite of his own personal feelings and sympathies, he was before all else one with his people, who were clamouring for the liberation of the Roumanians living beneath Hungarian sway. He said that if there was a general upheaval he would be unable to prevent Roumania's stepping in to claim what she considered her rights; that notwithstanding his old loyalties, he was first and foremost King of his country, and bound by oath to serve it through every sacrifice. He also warned the Emperor that if Italy broke her neutrality towards Germany, it would probably be impossible to prevent Roumania from doing the same.

The Kaiser paid little heed to his cousin's letter, and adopted a high-handed manner towards us, little conducive to encourage good feelings.

As far as was possible, I kept in close contact with the Allies, and both the King and Bratianu were continually calling upon my aid when there was specially delicate work to do.

The Emperor of Russia and the King of England being both of them my first cousins, it was easy for me to keep in touch with them unofficially, and of course I was ready to serve my country in every way. Being entirely trusted by both the King and his Prime Minister, I was more initiated into State affairs and secrets than is usual for queens. I was considered a valuable asset and therefore expected to do my share.

In March, 1915, General Arthur Paget, accompanied by Captain Carr Glynn, came on a mission to our part of the world, and we received them at Cotroceni. To me it was a great relief to be able at last to speak to an Englishman, and I explained our difficult situation and also gave him a

letter for King George, of which I here give a copy, it being descriptive of our anxieties at the time.

COTROCENI.
March 13th, 1915.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

General Paget's return to England gives me a safe occasion for sending a letter. He assured me that you would be pleased to hear from me, so I am only too glad to write, although these cruel times have taught me to weigh every word and to be as careful as possible even when my heart is bursting with the longing to say all that I really feel and think.

We are all going through anxious times, and it is terrible to contemplate how much suffering there is everywhere!

Being neutral I get news from all sides, and each side, of course, is dead-sure of victory and does all it can to persuade us that, for them, defeat is unthinkable. We have to sit still and watch whilst conflicting passions rage over our country, promises and threats being dangled over our heads.

Dear Uncle Carol's death came at a very hard moment for us—leaving us a tremendous responsibility at a time when the Fate of our country lay in the balance.

You know what his politics were, and perhaps you have heard that the last months of his life were saddened by a feeling of conflict between himself and his people, because Roumanian sympathies were French and always will be French, consequently to-day also English and Russian, but above all furiously anti-Hungarian, as for years Hungary has been considered our national foe, which means that we are also against Austria and Germany.

Even before Uncle's death, the country began to worship in me one whom they considered the supreme supporter of their national dream, Transylvania; and when we came to the throne my popularity was very great. This put me in a particularly delicate position; it is flattering, but I must not allow it to turn my head, for what is more odious than a woman who makes politics "on her own hook."

It is quite clear that public feeling is turning more and more towards the side where my heart really is. No German success or victory shakes Roumania's allegiance, nor can make her believe that any but the Entente can win. We have now pulled through the autumn and winter, guarding our neutrality and carefully watching events. Italy pretends to be our friend and to consider herself our elder sister, but Bulgaria, who of course plays a great part as far as we are concerned, hates us.

It was both a joy and a relief to me to be able to talk to General Paget and Captain Carr Glynn, as I could for once allow myself to speak more openly, and they can also tell you many things I cannot put down in writing.

We are well aware that the position of our country down here is of importance to both sides, but we also know that whatever way we

move we are staking our whole future, even, perhaps, our very existence. Our Government is most grateful to yours for its kindly disposition towards us. I for one am of course delighted to see England at last take some interest in Roumania.

Nando is placed in a cruel position, and I assure you it is terrible to watch his suffering, as all his affections, convictions, and traditions are, of course, on the other side. But above all, he is a man of duty and I *know* that nothing will count for him in the end but the good of his country : but, of course, he cannot launch himself into an adventure, cutting himself adrift from the old moorings, unless he can absolutely count upon the new. Russia could become a big bully if England and France do not countersign her promises. We know something of Russian ways and do not desire to throw ourselves into her huge arms without a safer guarantee than her momentary affection. Of course the Dardanelles question and that of our Black Sea Port is of paramount interest to us.

I well explained to your envoys our point of view and our needs, whilst in turn they explained England's side of the question. This has made me feel happier, but I am, nevertheless, full of anxiety, but I pray that in the end we shall be together !

As before mentioned, my position is delicate and all my tact is needed, my own sympathies and feelings must be kept well in hand, the country must be my sole consideration.

Up to the present Germany has always been a better friend to Roumania than England ; may God help and allow us to choose the right way.

All I can say is that it did my heart good to talk to English people, it was a moment of intense relief amidst many cares.

I hope that in spite of hard times, you and May keep well, and that both of you will have a kind thought for me and my struggling little country at a moment so all-important for us. Forgive the length of this letter.

Your affectionate cousin,
MISSY.

King George sent me a very kind answer to this letter which encouraged me to write to him again and more fully.

It was Bratianu who begged me to write this second missive as he rightly believed that a personal letter from me to the King of England would receive more attentive hearing than any other.

This rather long and ponderous letter was as follows :

COTROCIENI.

May 9/22, 1915.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Your letter received some time ago was a great pleasure to me,

especially as it is a great consolation in present troublous times to be in touch with you and beloved old England.

Your declaration that England is ready to protect smaller countries gives me the courage to come and worry you with questions of vital importance to us and I therefore beg you to read this letter with patience and sympathy even if it is long, and if it may seem strange to you that I should, myself, be so keenly insistent. But I love my adopted country, sharing its hopes and fears in a way rulers of larger states can hardly conceive.

For many years I have longed that Roumania should get into closer touch with England, and now that this has really come about I should like as clearly as possible to plead our cause even at the risk of trying your patience.

The frontiers of the Danube to the Theiss, as well as that of the Pruth in Bucovina, are essential conditions for Roumania's security and development.

I do not know if you are aware that, by an understanding come to last September, Russia in return for Roumania's promise of neutrality agreed that Roumania had the right to occupy, whenever she considered it advantageous, not only Transylvania, but also other parts of Austria-Hungary inhabited by Roumanians, as it is well known that Arad is the centre of Roumania's political interests in Hungary, but Arad is not in Transylvania. On the other hand the Banat of Temesvar, because of its geographical character and because of its population composed of Roumanians, Serbians and Germans, undoubtedly constitutes a definite region of its own.

The Roumanians are in greater number than the Germans, and the Germans in greater number than the Serbs. It is therefore neither a caprice nor a sudden pretention on the part of Roumania if she claims this land, but a justified insistence that a previously concluded understanding should be carried out. It must also be clearly understood that, if to-day we insist upon this demand, it is because we are well aware that military intervention is much more weighty and will demand much greater sacrifices than those anticipated last September.

The Allies have already reaped a great advantage by our attitude, for Russia not only had no Roumanian aggression to fear but was also able to send ammunition to the Serbians, whilst Turkey sees her defence of the Dardanelles made precarious, as Germany was not able to send her ammunition through our country. It would therefore be ungracious and misplaced to begin at this late hour to wrangle about our claims.

Besides, any Serbian expansion on the left side of the Danube would, for ethnical reasons, inevitably be followed by Roumania demanding lands on the right side, as the valley of Timoe is thickly populated by 300,000 Roumanians. (I am afraid all these geographical explanations must be Chinese to you, but the places *can* be found on a map!)

We well understand the importance of the defence of Belgrade, but that difficulty is less real, as the Serbians possess Semlin which is a guarantee for the complete defence of their capital.

A *tête de pont Serbe* on the left side of the Danube would certainly be a cause of continual irritation between both countries, whilst if it became once and for all an accepted thing that the Danube is a natural and insurmountable barrier, the two countries could mutually develop on their own lines, peacefully, without interfering with each other.

Added to these afore-mentioned reasons, there are also economic considerations such as that the Maros, the Theiss and the Danube form a line of communication of the greatest importance to countries and regions exclusively inhabited by Roumanians. I would particularly like you to understand that it is not caprice or obstinacy on our part, which makes us so intransigent in this question, but because we are conscious of its capital importance for us.

It is the same as regards the Pruth and Bucovina, where that river forms our only frontier against Russia since she took Bessarabia away from us, and if we have had to resign ourselves to this loss, it is nevertheless the most elementary instinct of self-preservation which prevents our being able to admit that our enormous neighbour should poach on the other side of the river.

The Bucovina as far as the Dniester was torn from Moldavia, of which it had from all times been a principal part, by Austria in 1777; it should therefore quite naturally fall to our share if Austria is dismembered.

So as not to wound the Russian *amour propre*, we give up discussing our claims to our richest part of this province which lies between the Pruth and the Dniester; but it would be illogical to admit that for so-called principles of nationality, Russia should cross the Pruth to possess a population of less than 200,000 Ruthenians, whilst we should be losing 1,500,000 Roumanians! The town of Cernowitz, which is declared not to be inhabited by Roumanians because it has been overrun by Jews and Germans, is nevertheless one of our chief centres of "Roumanisme."

Our geographical and military situation is such that we should be an important factor towards helping to end this terrible war which seems to have taken on the character of a *lutte d'usure*, but before Roumania can decide to break her neutrality and cast in her lot with the Allies, it isn't unnatural that she should wish to assure for herself conditions in keeping with the sacrifices expected of her and which she is ready to make.

It would be dangerous to allow Russia alone to settle the Roumanian question. In the actual circumstances the consequence of such a policy could be fatal.

Roumania must not be accused of wanting to coerce the Great Powers or to inflict upon them her point of view, but small as well as big countries have a right to defend their most vital interests, and for the small it is often a question of their very existence. It cannot be denied that a small piece of Bucovina, assuring her frontiers, has a greater importance for the future of a country the size of Roumania than for the development of an enormous empire like Russia. What

has but small importance for the Russian Government, might become on our side a fatal concession! For us, it is a question of necessity, dictated by the instinct of self-preservation, whilst for them it is purely a question of caprice born of a feeling of *amour propre*.

Forgive the tiresome length of all this; it must have been trying to read, but in the actual crisis through which Roumania is passing, I felt it my duty to lay the question before you so that you should uphold our interests in the measure you may find possible. It is all I can do for my country and you will, I am sure, understand the spirit which moved me when I took up my pen to write to you personally.

I have great confidence in England's sense of justice. May God not forsake us, our whole future is at stake. I feel confident, and yet I tremble, for it is terrible responsibility to throw one's very existence into this formidable venture.

God bless you and reward you for any help you can give us.

Your loving cousin,

MISSY.

It really needed all my love for my country to induce me to write such a lengthy letter to my cousin, a very dear cousin no doubt, but who could not be expected to have any particular interest in the Timoe, Theiss, Pruth or Dniester.

What lent a certain humour to the situation (for I can always see the humorous side) was that, in our youth, we had played "geographical" games together under my Mamma's critical supervision and I knew that European geography had not been George's strong point. Mamma had been very withering in her criticisms of our ignorance, so I could not help smiling whilst penning my lengthy missive inspired by patriotic loyalty, for I could almost see George's wrinkled brow whilst labouring through it. This I did not, however, tell Bratianu, for I had come to the bitter times when I *had* to take myself seriously; so seriously, in fact, that I also wrote much in the same spirit to the Emperor Nicolas, but I shall spare my readers repetition (transposed for Russian ears) of the same arguments sent to England, and shall only give a facsimile of his answer as to-day the reproduction of his writing cannot but deeply move all those who think of his terrible fate (pp. 32-35).

My letter to the Tsar was sent through my aunt, the Grand Duchess Vladimir, with whom I was in constant correspondence about the exchange of prisoners, etc. She

was a very important lady in Petersburg and very eager that we should come in on the Russian side.

I have all her letters and copies of all those I wrote to her, but I am afraid of wearying my readers if I print them in full, although they are very characteristic of the time; there are a few passages, however, which I shall quote.

In a letter written on October 2nd, 1915. I say:

We have been following with breathless interest news of the French offensive, praying that they may at last have a success. In consequence, here for us there have been troubled days and there are no end of short-sighted people who try to stir up public opinion against Nando, which is a shame, because whatever his sympathies may be, he is first of all the King of Roumania, and an excellent patriot. I have been told that Russian money is being largely squandered upon this, and it is a great mistake. Roumania does not need to be bought; it would be a good thing if this were well understood in Petersburg. Roumania's sympathies are on the Allied side, and it would be much better for Russia to use her money on Bulgaria which is, it seems, still hesitating, and the people, I believe, are very unwilling to move against Russia because of former sympathies: well-applied funds in that direction would be much better invested than in Roumania!

This I must also say: Nando may not be very energetic, but he has a curiously strong dose of resistance, and the more he is coerced and threatened, the less will he move; he is not what one may call a man of action, *mais on ne peut pas l'intimider*. Besides, I am there to help him fight his battles, and I am a good watch-dog, I can assure you! All this you may repeat where you consider it useful and my advice is: let well alone, for in trying to force things by unfair and even humiliating means, instead of helping the cause, you may be ruining it.

It would be better, in close understanding with your Allies and in agreement with us, to work so as to create such military conditions as would make our co-operation possible without leading our little country towards a disaster we are not willing to face.

I also wrote to my sister Ducky (the Grand Duchess Kyrill) who had been anxious about the German propaganda, on August 20th, 1915, and this is an extract from my letter.

It is certainly difficult to discuss political questions to-day—they are too burning, too explosive—and each man becomes too passionate as every country's fate is in the balance. But I can only tell you one thing: here, in spite of German successes and the non-success of the Entente, our people still have absolute confidence in the Entente's victory. I am even astonished at this because it must be remembered that the Roumanians are *des Latins* and Latins adore success, but they are staunchly

Tsarskoe' Selo. May 29
June 11 1915.



My dearest Missy,

I thank you heartily for your long and interesting letter. You have pleaded the cause of your country in a wonderfully clear way.

I followed very closely the negotiations which are going on between our governments.

I must frankly own that we were deeply amazed by your country's enormous demands.

From the beginning of this war

Sazonov and I took it for granted that Transylvania and the southern portion of Bucovina would be allotted to Roumania after the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.

If one took the area of all those territories which the allied Powers cherish the possession of and compared it to the vast stretch of land that Roumania is striving for — I think I will not be mistaken in saying — that your country would become twice its present size. Here the whole population included —

pure roumanian, - we would be the first to gladly consent to such a scheme!

But there are other people Russia must think of, being a great power herself.

First of all the incorporation of the land inhabited by real russians, our brothers by faith and blood, into another country would be unjustified. For the same reason the serbians, our brave little allies, ought not to be robbed of that portion of the Banat in question. Certainly they will be recompensed elsewhere too, but don't forget that they are carrying the hardships of this frightful

war for over 10 months.

Nevertheless I have given Sazonov instructions to bring the negotiations between our governments to a speedy and successful conclusion by making some concessions, provided Roumania takes an active part at once.

I fervently hope that the friendly feelings existing between our two countries will be sealed by a sound and ever lasting alliance.

Alix and I send you our fondest love. God bless you and your family.

Ever, dearest Missy,
your loving cousin

Nicky

sticking to their sympathies and all the most clever and lavish propaganda has not made them change, though these last military events have somewhat sobered their belligerent enthusiasm, as no country cares to commit suicide unless its speciality is war and its King a *Räuberhauptmann*, which our dear Nando certainly is not.

As for money, alas, yes, it has been spent and squandered everywhere, and there are always greedy hands to be found and false hearts that can be bought even to their country's detriment. You know this in Russia, alas, better than anywhere else, but here it would never assume such proportions and would be reduced, I think, to a few *Geschäfte*! I do not think it could make traitors in the army, although to-day one hears so many horrors one would never have thought possible.

German money has been extraordinarily profuse everywhere, in all ways that nation is completely and systematically organized, but their policy and politicians are heavy and our Latins are never quite dupes, although for some, of course, as everywhere else, money has an irresistible scent!

You cannot imagine with what a bleeding heart I follow your retreat, hardly daring to open a telegram. Luckily all those in my personal service, my ladies, Miss Milne, the children's governess, my A.D.C., are completely "Entente," only with Nando I must use tact always.

The Grand Duchess Vladimir in answering one of my letters wrote the following:

PETROGRAD.

12th June, 1915.

MY DEAR MISSY,

I just received the enclosed letter from Nicky in answer to yours which I handed over to him. As you wanted me to read it first I did so and was full of admiration of the clever way you knew how to speak for your country—the real language of a real queen! After reading your letter I spoke to Sassonov and pleaded your cause. I have the impression that both he and Nicky are sincerely willing to come to a good understanding with Roumania, and to bring about a satisfactory alliance with you, making certain concessions, but of course Russia has also other obligations, etc. . . .

And here she repeats more or less what the Tsar said in his letter.

All these different correspondences show how actively interested all sides were about our intentions and how I did all I could to make Roumania's attitude understood by our future Allies who were almost as anxious as our enemies.

Earlier in the year 1915, I received the following private communication from the British Military Attaché in Sofia, which proves how the Entente counted upon my help.

BRITISH LEGATION,
SOFIA.

March 29th, 1915.

MADAM,

Your Majesty will, I hope, pardon the great liberty I am taking in addressing you direct by the post, but I believe it to be in the interest of my country, of Roumania and of Bulgaria that Your Majesty should be informed. Privately speaking, I believe that in spite of Mr. Radoslavov's public declaration of neutrality, at the present moment the Bulgarian Government is very well disposed towards the Triple Entente. The visits of General Paget and also of General Pau were both very opportune, and both Generals were enthusiastic at the way they were received by the King of Bulgaria.

In my opinion there is almost as much distrust of Roumanian intentions in Bulgaria, as there is of Bulgarian intentions in Roumania, and yet I am convinced that neither country has the slightest intention of attacking the other.

If the Roumanian Government would now give Bulgaria an assurance of sympathy in the event of Bulgaria joining the Triple Entente, I believe it would assist the Government here towards deciding to come in with us.

I beg Your Majesty to treat this letter as entirely private and confidential and not inform even my own Legation at Bucarest, and forgive me the liberty I have taken in presenting my humble duty as

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

H. D. NAPIER, M.A.¹

¹ This letter was written only some ten days after the sinking of three British ships in an attempt to force the Dardanelles.

Just before that calamity the Bulgarian Government had begun to realize the probability of the forcing of the Straits, that they could no longer afford to sit on the fence, but must join the Triple Entente without delay. Then came the news of the check to the British Fleet, which gave the Bulgars time to pause. Meanwhile Turkey had been greatly alarmed and some of their refugees, and railway archives, had reached Philippopolis.

It was more important at that time for us to secure Bulgaria's assistance, owing to her geographical situation, than that of any other country, and my endeavours were directed towards allaying her suspicions of an attack from her rear when engaged against the Turks.

In fact, I had been accredited first to Bulgaria, and subsequently to Roumania also, with the object of helping towards a *rapprochement* between these two countries.

Extraordinary times demanded extraordinary measures, and I considered myself justified in writing this letter without involving the Legations to which I had been attached.

H. D. NAPIER. (*November, 1934.*)

So many years have passed since this letter was written that I think to-day it is no indiscretion to publish it. For me it has a double interest, firstly because it reminds me of the time when I was called upon from all sides, and secondly because it had constantly been one of my chief regrets that England was always more inclined to trust Bulgaria rather than Roumania, and I well remember how many heated discussions I had on this subject: Why does England believe more in Bulgaria than in Roumania? Or, to put it into my own sort of language: Why on earth is England sentimental about Bulgaria?

I never received an answer to this question!

1916.

For the New Year Ion Bratianu sent me the following letter in answer to my good wishes. I give the letter in facsimile (see pages 40-43) because times pass quickly away and all things are soon forgotten. As the text is French in the original I translate it also into English.

BUCAREST.

8/21 January, 1916.

MADAME,

The gracious words Your Majesty deigned to send me have a special significance amidst the trials we are enduring.

The goodwill Your Majesty never ceased showing me has often permitted me to call upon your personal co-operation in grave circumstances.

I shall never forget the precious aid she has been for Roumania and the Roumanian cause.

While gratefully thanking Your Majesty for her gracious kindness, I beg her never to doubt my unalterable devotion to herself and her family whose greatness is inseparable from that of my Country.

I am Your Majesty's most respectful servant,

ION BRATIANU.

As time advanced, Nando clung to me more and more, I seemed to be his anchor, the one thing he could hold on to in this world of suffering. He knew also that although my sympathies were with the Allies I felt no hatred towards the other side, only an immense pain that this misery of having to choose had come into our lives.

From all parts I was called upon to help, and I was



ION BRATIANU.

always ready to do so as this little letter from Herr von dem Busche proves, which he wrote to me in English on October 8th, 1915.

YOUR MAJESTY

I have been informed by the Chancellor that the Russian Government has agreed to exchange Baron von Korff and Count Palianowsky for Baron von Löwenfeld and Landrat Peters. Herr von Bethmann Hollweg orders me to express to Your Majesty his most respectful thanks for the great human interest shown to our imprisoned functionaries.

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,
BUSCHE.

It was thanks to the close touch I kept with the Grand Duchess Vladimir in Petersburg that I was able to plead for prisoners in Russia. My aunt was a very active and influential lady and was one of those who found time to answer every appeal.

On the other hand, the Emperor William, wildly elated by recent victories, was sending snorting telegrams which passed *en clair* through our country. One, to his sister, Queen Sophie of Greece, contained loud threats against any who would dare oppose his victorious armies and his *Deutscher Gott*.

All this was very painful to my husband, more especially as in his own country there was a turbulent war-party which tried periodically to stir up ill-feeling against the King, considering him too passive and pretending to doubt his loyalty.

Chief amongst these was Nicolas Filipescu, an honest and convinced patriot, but hot-headed and over-ready to give vent to the violence of his political passions. Having been War Minister, and a very efficient one, in a former Conservative Government, he had retained the somewhat pugnacious attitude of the military man: besides, he never had any real sympathy for King Ferdinand.

I, on the contrary, found favour in his eyes, and as it also fell to my share to try and tame those in too vehement opposition, it was considered wise that Nicu Filipescu and I should come together.

So as to avoid any official meeting, a ride through the

PRESIDENCE
DU
CONSEIL DES MINISTRES

Le 8/21 Janvier 1916

Madame,

Les paroles si gracieuses
que Votre Majesté veut
bien m'adresser acquièrent
encore plus de prix au
milieu des épreuves qui
nous sont imposées.

La bienveillance que

Votre Majesté n'a cessé
de me témoigner à tous
jours été pour moi le
plus efficace des encourage-
ments et elle m'a per-
mis au milieu des cir-
constances si graves que
nous traversons d'avoir
souvent recours à l'ac-
tion personnelle de
Votre Majesté.

Je n'oublierai jamais
le concours précieux qu'

Elle a prodigué au pays
roumain et à la cause
du peuple roumain.

Je prie, Votre Majesté,
avec la plus profonde
reconnaissance pour ses
gracieux sentiments,
de vouloir bien continuer
à ne pas douter du
dévotement immuable
que j'ai pour Elle
et pour la famille
dont la grandeur ne
saurait être séparée
de celle de mon pays.

*Je suis de Votre
Majesté le très
respectueux serviteur
Ion Brătianu*

Bufta woods was organized, for Nicu Filipescu had the virtue of being a horse-lover, and we believed that a conversation on horseback might be conducive to good understanding.

Well do I remember that ride towards evening through the summer forest, when I had to make use of all my feminine tact to try and quiet the belligerent gentleman, who was already brandishing his sword for the entry into Transylvania.

I patiently and mildly explained the King's point of view, his sense of responsibility, his reasons for caution, begging him to restrain his ardour and not to doubt his King, who was as ardent a patriot as he, but who could not precipitate himself into a wild adventure before he had come to a perfect and also safe understanding with his future allies.

The ride was a success: I cannot say how much I was able to pacify Nicu Filipescu, but it strengthened our regard for each other.

I often came towards evening to ride in the Bufta woods, escaping thus for awhile from the heat of Bucarest.

Bufta was a well-run property, quite near the capital, and Prince Stirbey had cut long avenues through his forest along which we could gallop for miles on good ground. The Prince and three of his daughters were excellent riders, and we were happy all together.

I loved these woods with their carpet of flowers changing according to season, from the little yellow crocus to the deep violet pea-flower of full summer, which spread its gorgeous clusters of colour over the ground. When I close my eyes I can still smell the pungent odour of the scrub oaks, so particularly aromatic of an evening when they seemed to exhale their very souls into the cooling hours of dusk.

With steaming horses and glowing cheeks we would return full of *joie de vivre* to the cosy old-fashioned house where Nadèjde, fresh and radiant, would be awaiting us on the threshold inviting us in for a welcome meal, tea or supper according to the hour of the day.

Nowhere were the strawberries and raspberries as large nor the cream as thick and butter as fresh as at the Buftea board, and how I enjoyed the exquisitely fresh little peas and home-baked bread, all those good things I had once known in English country houses. There was also that pleasant atmosphere of family life lived "far from the madding crowd" and many a happy hour have I spent under the Stirbeys' hospitable roof, surrounded by faithful hearts in which I could trust.

At Mogosoia, Marthe Bibesco had also open doors. The flowers she cultivated were beautiful and I was fond of sauntering with her through her grounds, appreciating her excellent taste and keenly interested in the clever way she was restoring the old Brancovan palace which stood reflecting its beautiful but lonely face in the still waters it overlooked.

We would paddle in small boats through the high reeds and watch the marvellous Roumanian sunsets turn sky and water to flame. Dreamy evenings full of melancholy charm which George Valentin Bibesco would occasionally dispel with his boisterous activities, whilst Marthe's soft voice would evoke a thousand dreams and also a thousand illusions which life swept away like chaff before the wind.

There was also Alexandrine Cantacuzène's place, Ciocanesti. She was a Paladi by birth, one of the friends of my youth. Small, animated, "le verbe facil," she was always earnest and is to-day our foremost feminine leader whose name is well known through all the reforming world.

She had a dear old house on the borders of a large lake, and she too planted many flowers and invited me to make harvest of her fields of La Tosca roses, so fragrant, loose petalled and delicately pink. Because of the heat, it was always at the hour of sunset that I came to these country places, so the visions retained are those of a world saturated with glowing orange light.

But the most poignant remembrances I have are of the late evening drives my husband and I used to take in the summer of 1916, the last weeks before war was declared.

I knew all the King was going through, how his heart was torn and tortured with doubts and regrets. Worn out by the soul-conflict he was enduring, he was sleeping badly, so when the day's work was over I used to tempt him out. He loved driving his motor and I would sit beside him without many words; what he needed was the constant presence of someone who knew his trouble without trying to talk about it, and who was all the same there if he wanted to discuss the approaching events.

Nando was exceedingly hazy about details of everyday life. He was a man of habit, but I think he never truly realized how his house was being run. I never bothered him with details, always preferring extra work rather than trying to explain things to those slow of execution; but this, of course, had made me an important, if not always recognized, factor in our home. This habit of counting upon me for his material comforts had been unconsciously extended also to brain-work. I grasped things easily, even those not really within my province, and my old attitude of not taking myself over seriously allowed him to ignore how great a help I really was. This was important or he might have crept back into his shell. Nando was easily suspicious and needed handling with extreme care. All this, to explain how warily I had to go.

But he liked these evening drives. A blind urge impelled us to seek out and to see again all those places we had cared for in our youth.

The future lay before us like a fiery portal we should have to pass; all the unknown lay beyond. To-day our

country was still ours as we had always known it, and we wanted, so to speak, to feel, to touch, to grasp it once more before great changes came.

So we drove in every direction, towards the hills, towards the Danube, far out into the immensity of the sunbaked dust-veiled plains. Those were wonderful evenings when, feeling almost bodiless, we seemed to be flying through the haze of sunset, files of creaking carts coming towards us, heaped with hay, with wheat or occasionally with huge pyramids of orange tomatoes like freights of gigantic precious stones. The peasants patiently plodding beside their stone-grey oxen would raise their sheepskin bonnets and stare after us through the dust.

On the road to Giurgevo I possessed a small country house surrounded by fields and a large park with beautiful old trees. This place had been left to me by a very old gentleman, an uncle of the before-mentioned Nicolas Filipescu. In the years when motors had come into our lives, abolishing distance, I had discovered this shady retreat and loved to roam over its forsaken, grass-grown paths. Instead of resenting my trespassing, the old gentleman, who had loved this place in his youth, was touched when he heard that his blonde Crown Princess had such a predilection for his abandoned grounds, and when he died I suddenly found myself the owner of Copaceni.

This filled me with delight. It was the first piece of land I had ever possessed, a ground over which I had undisputed rights and with which I could do as I would, embellishing, improving it according to taste.

I always had the faculty of enjoying things to their utmost and of getting others to share my joy, so Copaceni had become dear to us all. Although in those days I had not a penny of my own to spend, I lived in the happy dreams of what I would do one day. . . .

Now, the material means for realizing those dreams might have been within my reach, but we were facing a future that for the moment allowed of no happy plans.

But our evening drives often ended at Copaceni, where we would sup on the open veranda of the very old house, which I hoped one day to make beautiful, and I tried to

get Nando to unburden his heart, and to ease his oppression with words.

But often we sat side by side, silent, chin on hand, gazing out into the night, watching the stars come out one by one, lighting the skies with mystical signs. Our thoughts hung heavy on the stifling, dust-filled summer air, we could almost hear our heart-beats, but words came with difficulty; each one had to be torn from the depths of our separate pain, and more than ever I realized in those hours how cruelly each man is a fortress unto himself.

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Chapter IV

THE DECISION FOR WAR

AND then came the King's birthday on August 24th. We received the ministers in the big golden Cotroceni drawing-room. It was a hot summer's day and I had dimmed the light, for our faces were pale and I knew my husband's thoughts.

An atmosphere of tremulous expectation lay over this ceremony; the King was fighting back his tears and I stood beside him helping him through the ordeal. Bratianu presented the Government's congratulations in well-chosen words, accentuating the faith and trust they all had in their King. Every sentence was heavy with significance, but each utterance was still guarded; nothing positive was pronounced. Nando answered, his voice trembled somewhat, but *noblesse oblige*, and a new dignity had become his since he was King. To-day he was facing his people as sovereign, his rôle had changed. For so many long years he had only been Uncle's obedient echo, now he stood out in the limelight, *his* was the responsibility, *he* had to take decisions, but I stood beside him; there was assurance in my presence, he felt this and so did his Government.

And from now onwards I shall allow my diary to relate what came to us. I have described every single day from the 14th/27th of August onwards, and the first entry is:

Cotroceni, August 14/27th, 1916.

I awake this morning knowing what is going to be—I have known it for many weeks, am one of the only ones who have known it. I have carried the terrible secret about with me without speaking of it as others were not to know. I have laughed and made plans and have acted as though everything were as usual, and yet I knew.

What a beautiful morning, how silent and peaceful it is, yet I know that it is going to be war!

War! For two years it has been kept off, for two long years and now it is to be—war!

How much has happened, how much have I seen and heard and done since last I wrote in this book. A pity I did not put everything down day by day, event by event, but I was too lazy, also too busy. Then other writings filled my mind and time. But to-day I can think of nothing else but that it's to be war—war.

And we are a small country with enemies on both sides, yet it is to be war!

Dear old Auntie is dead! She was mercifully taken away so as not to see this. It is better that she went before, her heart would have broken over it, if there had been something left of it to break.

She believed that the Germans alone had a right to win, to exist, because it was their turn to rule the world, they were the chosen people, etc., etc. . . .

Yet in spite of all this, it is towards the other side that our country turns, it believes in the final victories of the Allies, it hopes to realize its great dream!

Are we right, are we wrong? I know not, but the moment has come.

Oh, the struggles it has cost, the doubts, the anxiety, the fluctuations one way or another.

Poor Nando, I know all that he has gone through. I know so many things, I have been so intimately mixed up with it all day by day almost.

Although a woman, from the first I have been trusted: I have been told many secrets, I have known all that was going on. I have hoped and despaired with them and now the moment has come!

It has been so much talked of that one hardly believed in it any more. For two long years we have preserved our neutrality, coerced, insulted, bribed by first one side then the other. Many profited by it, some have become rich, others poor, and now the die has been cast and it is war—war on the side of the Entente.

It is war against Austria. It is war perhaps also against

Germany! Our little country has become the Ally of dear old England, of France, of Russia, of Italy, Serbia, Japan. Also of poor heroic little Belgium, and shall I also count Montenegro?

On the north we have the Austrians, perhaps the Germans, against us . . . and in the south the Bulgarians, and yet I have always been told that we are not strong enough to make war on two fronts. Well we shall see!

Both sides tried to bribe us, to buy us, to win us for their cause.

I believe rivers of money have been poured over us, yet at the bottom of their hearts my Roumanians had but one real sympathy—France; but one ideal—Transylvania.

Certainly there was a party for Germany with old Carp at the head, reasonable people, which made it all the harder for Nando; but they couldn't carry it against the real feeling, the feeling for the other side. Once, before Serbia was annihilated, we were told it was our time for coming into the great dance. At that moment Serbia still existed and Bulgaria had not yet joined hands with Germany, but Sarraïl had no troops!

In some ways the situation would have been more favourable, but at that moment the Russians were beaten and we could have no contact with that side.

My head spins when I think of all that has gone before, it already seems history! The one great reality of this moment is that we are at war!

The last two or three weeks have been poignant; I knew the day that it might be and had to live as though I did not, because the date had to be kept absolutely secret, success depending on absolute silence: we have so many enemies in the country—and the Germans have such wonderful spies.

I had the feeling I must leave Nando alone as little as possible; there could be but one solution, all his hopes and desires could not, dared not, count against that. I saw it coming all along, saw that the hideous sacrifice could not be spared him, it would have to be made.

With all my affection I tried to lead him to the realization of this, to help him face the greatest grief of his life:

the going against the country of his birth, against his brothers, his friends, against all that he had loved and believed in, all that was his youth, his memories, his sympathies: truly it was a mighty sacrifice, but he made it because before all else he is the King of this country, a good Roumanian, and he too finally believed it best.

Such things happen in this world; such sacrifices have to be made, for fate is stronger than reason and patriotism stronger than personal sympathies.

Only I and one other know what he has been through. Day by day have I seen him suffer, struggle, doubt and hope, but the cup had to be emptied, the last drop had to be drunk; nothing was spared him, neither threats nor prayers, nor calls upon his honour as a Hohenzollern, as a German officer; he was reminded of former treaties, of old Uncle's inheritance, of all the politics that had been.

And from the other side he was looked upon as an enemy, with suspicion; his own country doubted him, he was called traitor, coward, he was insulted in the papers, nothing was spared him.

Few believed what I told them, that when the moment came, he would make his sacrifice, but that he would not make it too soon, at the last moment only, so as to keep off the horrors of war as long as possible.

All this summer of 1916 it has been coming nearer and nearer, especially since the Russian advance; it was the sign that our hour was approaching, our great hour—but it had so often been put off, no one believed in it any more, but I knew. I knew the dates, I knew the conventions, so day by day I hoped and feared. Of all hideous dreads war was the worst, and yet I knew that the honour of the country stood higher than that dread. Owing to circumstances I was more intimately mixed up with it than most queens would have been. My shoulders were considered broad enough to carry certain weights, my heart was considered large enough to have the right courage; so I was not kept out of things, and when needed, I was used as a help.

And so it came that I knew the date of the 14/27 August long before others knew. Arrangements had to be secretly

made, everything depended upon secrecy. Thank God Nando and I had two men in our house we could trust, Barbu Stirbey and Colonel Ballif, our A.D.C., two men we knew that no one could bribe.

At certain moments one must have the courage to trust people—these two we trusted and not in vain. Pages and pages could I write about it all, there is so much to say, but too much to write it all down.

I was at Sinaia when the political convention with the Allies was to be signed. In certain words it was to be announced to me by telephone when the great moment had come. (Prince Stirbey sent me the message and Simky Lahovary who brought it to me did not know what it meant.)

The message came to me when I was in bed. I simply said "Thank you," as though it had been a quite simple message.

There I sat in my bed alone and knew, knew that it was war—war! That ten days after the signing we were to come into the great struggle, that we were to live or die!

Shall I ever forget that emotion! To know that the die was cast, that there was no going back.

Next day I got up with my heavy secret and the whole world seemed changed. I laughed with the others, talked with them, but could hardly understand that my voice hadn't taken on another sound. It is awful to carry such a secret alone!

Then came this great and terrible day.

I sat in my room, knowing that down below Nando was facing all his ministers and statesmen, was standing up for a cause that went against his instinct, knowing also that he would not have everybody with him as he hoped, especially because then it would have better justified his action before the eyes of those who had hoped he would have put his name of Hohenzollern before his honour as Roumanian King. For three mortal hours I sat waiting for what was coming, and I remembered how in August, 1914, old King Carol had called together a great "Conseil de la Couronne" at Sinaia, when he tried to persuade his people

to go into war on the side of Germany and Austria in whose victory he absolutely believed. All his statesmen were against him except old Carp, the only man he had never been able to get on with. And yet it was to be his fate to stand alone with that one man to back him, the man he had not liked. A tragic moment when he felt all his work crumbling, or rather the crumbling of the politics he had firmly believed in and so constantly lived up to.

He died soon after, died in fact of a broken heart. Before his death he was still to see that the war was not going on as he expected. The entry of England and the battle of the Marne shook his conception of things.

He expected the French to crumple up as in 1870. The first weeks of war seemed to confirm him in this belief, the overrunning of Belgium, the advance into France; but the battle of the Marne changed the face of things.

Once when old Aunt Elisabeth said, "Let us all die and go up to heaven together," Uncle severely answered: "I don't want to die, I'm too interested, I want to see this to the end." He was not destined to see the end.

Yes, I sat there thinking of all this and wondering what I was to hear. Then came the hour when I did know: the hour when it was settled: War on the side of the Allies!

Maioresco, Carp, Theodor Rossetti and Marghiloman made opposition. Carp violently because he always had but one conviction, that Roumania's only chance was with the Germans, because the Germans were sure to win. He was an honest man with an honest tongue that sometimes ran away with him, and at the end of this Crown Council he became excessively rude.

Maioresco, it seems, was oily and polite, for such was his way. Marghiloman was for neutrality and developed the theory of the illogicality of going in on a side where victory would mean the Dardanelles and Constantinople for Russia, whom he considered Roumania's classical adversary; besides, he had gone too far in one direction to be able so quickly to change face, but he remained polite as he always was.

Poor Nando stood up against them (and these, let it be added, were those he liked best) and had to uphold the

others because he considered it his duty to decide that way. It was a great moment of supreme sacrifice which he made for his country; may God bless this sacrifice and may it be a sacrifice for Roumania's good fortune!

The declaration of war was to be handed by our Roumanian Minister at Vienna to the Austrian Foreign Office at six o'clock and that same night our troops were to cross the frontiers at certain points already decided and prepared for a long time.

We had to tell the children, who knew nothing, to tell our German servants, which was most painful.

The servants mostly volunteered to remain with us, but certainly they could only do so under certain conditions; more or less as *prisonniers de guerre*.

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HOW I RODE IN ROUMANIAN DRESS.

Chapter V

THE FIRST WAR DAYS

I CANNOT of 'course' copy out my diary day for day : it would be too long, and much of it is repetition, so I select that which best tells my tale, occasionally copying out several days in succession, then leaving gaps when nothing of particular importance took place.

The 14th/27th August was followed by the usual war excitements, mighty enthusiasm, the departure of troops, bustling and eager preparation on the part of the Red Cross. The organizing of private hospitals (amongst others my own in the Bucarest palace), the fraternizing with our Allies, the receiving of deputations, the cruel breach with many who had been friends.

The King was the hero of the day, for he had said the words which had been expected of him, he had drawn his sword ; the doubters were ashamed of having doubted or pretended that they never had done so. This tremendous outburst of enthusiasm helped Nando over his sacrifice.

It was not considered safe that we should remain at Cotroceni, which was a military centre, and therefore particularly exposed to air-attacks, so Nando and Carol went with Head-quarters to Scroviste Peris, and I with our five other children to Buftea, the Stirbeys' place, the Prince's family moving to a smaller house in the same grounds.

From here I was continually driving backwards and forwards to the town or to see the King at Scroviste, or to visit hospitals. My own hospital was not yet ready as I had not dared begin any preparations before war was declared, but with the help of Prince Stirbey and Ballif I had been secretly laying in stores for some time past.

At first our troops advanced rapidly into Transylvania to the immense exultation of the capital, but I watched their

advance with anxiety. We were so inexperienced, and, though brave, our army was small, and how could we expect to stand out against such adversaries? Why should we imagine we could rush in and win?

The Allies indeed had promised all sorts of military aid, especially the Russians, but what would they really do; what would they be able to do?

A terrible feeling of restlessness came over me, also a disagreeable sensation of impotence. Where could I help? When could I help? For the moment our people were cocksure, but I trembled before the reaction which was sure to come. Were we sufficiently prepared? What would Germany do?

The answer was not long in coming, as shall soon be seen.

On August 30/September 12th, 1916, I wrote this letter to the King of England:

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I want to send you a word by General Georgesco, so as to tell you that although we tried to keep off war as long as possible, I am happy now that the great moment has come for us, that it is on the side of England that we are fighting. I always knew that it would end like this, indeed I was confident that it would not be otherwise, but the struggles were hard and poor Nando has made a tremendous sacrifice—the greatest that can be asked of a King and of a man; to go against his own brothers, against the country he was born in, that he loved. I alone know all he has gone through, nothing was spared him, but I also always knew when others doubted, that he *would* do it, when the good of his country demanded it.

We are living through anxious days, our frontiers are very long, we have enemies on both sides and we are new to war—to the modern horror of war. We are a small country and we are risking our existence—we know it—but we have courage and confidence in the final result. The loss of Turtucaia was grievous; our people are so enthusiastic for the Transylvanian side that they are inclined to overlook the great danger of the Bulgarians, who are good soldiers and hate us with a deadly hate. I only hope Russia will keep her promise and not leave us in the lurch: it would be disastrous for us as well as for the Entente, if the Bulgarians were not beaten. With the Bulgarians well beaten, the face of things would certainly change. They are not an enemy one can afford to despise, for they are courageous, ambitious, false, they are led by Germans, have German artillery and are also fighting for their existence. Large countries cannot realize what little countries have to face at such moments—"To be or not to be." We know this

and yet we felt that war must be for the sake of our future, for the sake of the good cause.

We are separated from England by the whole of Europe, yet we feel that England can be our great support and it is England that we trust. I never imagined that it would be the lot of our generation, we who were children together, to see this great war and in a way to have to remodel the face of Europe. Why I am so anxious about the Bulgarian question is that I well realize its tremendous importance, not only from our point of view. We were quite ready to leave the Bulgarians alone and even ready to give them back a bit of the ground we had taken from them in 1913. But I want you to understand that at this moment I am only considering the *general* cause. The Bulgarians must be beaten: that would mean the fall of Constantinople, Serbia saved, the Allies' armies on the Danube, and the circle around the Central Powers quite closed and getting tighter and tighter. Yes, I confess I am anxious about that Bulgarian side. Our country is profoundly enthusiastic about the advance in the North, as *there* lies all its ideal, the dream of hundreds of years, which it is now fighting for. I know that one of these days the great battle will have to be fought down in Dobrugea, and I must say, I tremble because so much depends upon it. There is nothing of the coward about me, but I have my eyes wide open so as not to be taken by surprise. We are new to war for the moment; in spite of all one has heard and read about it, it is one's own first losses which make one realize things entirely.

This letter is just a confidential letter from cousin to cousin, written badly, written in haste, because my hands are full, and there is so much to do and see to which one must do oneself.

Once more let me tell you that I am happy we are together in these great and terrible times, and let me have the feeling that we can always turn to you when in need, as there may be very hard times to face. I am not afraid but I am anxious.

My best love to May.

Your affectionate Cousin,
MISSY.

Buſtea, August 30th/September 12th, 1916.

A tiring day. Went early into town to see about my hospital. Everything goes much more slowly than I would like. Went to visit the Gerota Sanatorium. Was very pleased with how it was kept. The invalids looked comfortable and clean. There were a good many officers there.

Lunched at Cotroceni with Nando after a meeting of the committee for my ambulances, which seem to be satisfactory. The sum of money has increased splendidly, even my dear regiment sent me money; I was very much touched.

After lunch walked about for nearly three hours in the

military hospital; any quantity of wounded who looked pretty comfortable, a few only were badly wounded. One, dying from a shot in the spine, was in terrible pain but happily almost unconscious.

They always greet me with touching joy, so I think my visits are really not useless. I bring them flowers, sweets and cigarettes.

To the most badly wounded I try to talk a little longer. They hardly complain at all. The thing which touches me more than I can say, and brings tears to my eyes, is that when I ask them if they are suffering they one and all answer: "Yes, I am suffering, but never mind as long as you become Empress of all the Roumanians." It is the eternal refrain, each humble little life is ready to bleed to death as long as I become "Empress of all the Roumanians," for there are such follies in the world. I suppose it is these follies that make humanity do great things. May God bless their effort and may their suffering not be all in vain. It makes me feel so humble. Why should they have to suffer, to give their lives so that I should rule over many, and amongst which, if really there is to be a day of victory, these simple creatures will probably be no more. It is the eternal why.

One man—he was quite young—who was terribly wounded by a dumdum bullet, was lying on his stomach because no other position was possible to him; however, he turned his head round to look at me. "Hard did they hit me, Mamma Regina," he said, "hard did they hit me, those enemies." I bent over him with tears in my eyes and asked if he was suffering. "I am suffering, Mamma Regina," and then came the eternal refrain, "but may you live to become Empress of all the Roumanians."

I could not bear it, it seemed almost too much, I could hardly see all the other faces because of the tears which blinded my eyes.

They all keep looking at me when I enter a room as though all their eyes took possession of me; a strange weight to carry, the look of so many eyes—I never knew it would be so heavy. All those eyes, one after another, staring up at me, some with love, some with astonishment,

some with sad indifference, some with joy which lights up their faces, some with mute pain, some as though calling for help, but one and all resigned, terribly resigned. These days I have bent over so many beds and looked into so many eyes—and they all follow me wherever I move, each way I turn, I feel them upon me, hundreds of them. . . .

Came back to the palace to see the ladies for my hospital who had all been called together. So many have volunteered that I have too many ladies! Madame Henri Catargi, the wife of our Maréchal de la Cour, is at the head of it, a practical and energetic person with a tremendous sense of order, a regular general in her sphere.

Drove back to Buftea for a late cup of tea and immediately started off by motor to plunder Didine Cantacuzène's flowers at Ciocanesti for my wounded. I had permission to take as many as I need.

A marvellous evening, the sun going down on one side, the moon rising on the other, large, round, magnificent. Came back in the dark with a flower-filled motor, the moon lighting our way with almost fearful radiance.

I kept wondering how many dead faces were staring up at this same moon, and worse still how many wounded who have not been picked up!

The war news to-day was pretty satisfactory, but what will the coming days bring us?

Buftea, Monday, September 5th/18th, 1916.

I am desperate not to be able to help; I feel I ought to be doing something, something useful, something energetic. But what can a woman do in modern war? These are no more the heroic times of Jeanne d'Arc. I only know that if I were at the head of things I would not sit down and mope; I should want to be everywhere at once and see everything with my own eyes.

But it's so easy to say what one would do when one is not going to be called upon to do it! But I am anxious, I have a sort of uncomfortable feeling that there is confusion amongst our leaders.

Later.

A lovely day, fresh, clear, delicious, invigorating air. The first news brought me to-day was not too bad. I pray to God that it may not become worse. Our troops are fighting bravely, and the Russians have begun their attack to uphold them. My prayers, all my prayers are with them; may God give them the courage and the strength they will need. Materially and morally these fights are so terribly important for us!

Evening.

No definite news, but at least nothing bad, although we know the Germans have detached troops from France to send to fight against us in Transylvania. They very naturally want to beat us from both sides at once. Otherwise the news in general is decidedly to the advantage of the Entente.

Since we are at war it is as though the time before were cut off with a line of fire. I seem to remember another country, another people, another life, another me! Just now I have no patience with people who cannot stand little worries. When the governess *me fait la tête* because one of the maids cannot see her cousin, or when the nurse is dignified and melancholy because the meat was tough and could not be eaten "by those poor little darlings," then I feel exasperated. But it is all-important that I should control my temper and keep my feelings to myself, for so much depends upon my own good-humour.

Everybody, of course, is offended with Ballif because he is the gaoler. I must admit he is severe in a military fashion which is not always either agreeable or pleasant; but order must be maintained.

Bufta, Monday, September 12th/25th, 1916.

. . . Lunched at Cotroceni and directly afterwards went back to my hospital. I had something to do in the upper rooms of the palace where Auntie used to live, when suddenly I heard violent shooting. I went out on the balcony to find the sky full of small white puffs of smoke and the shoot-

ing from all sides becoming louder and louder. In vain I scanned the sky for the much-hated aeroplanes: the sun was in my eyes, and I could see nothing but that marvellously radiant sky and those little balls of smoke so dazzlingly white. It was rather a lovely sight and somehow did not in the least inspire me with any feeling of anxiety, though I was mildly excited. What was not therefore my horror when on going downstairs again I found my hospital in a state of turmoil because of a terribly wounded soldier who had been brought in from the street. At the same time we received the news that hundreds of people have been killed and wounded in different parts of the town. The Coltea and Brancovan hospitals are full of terribly mutilated human beings carried in from all sides.

For three mortal hours all hands available worked frantically to try and save the life of the unfortunate man who had been brought to us. A bit of bomb had pierced the upper part of his right leg through and through, cutting the big arteries; the man was in fact bleeding to death.

Our surgeon set about operating on him and endeavouring to staunch the blood he was losing in buckets. My ladies behaved admirably, everybody volunteering to help, even those least accustomed to such sights. The worst of it was that the man, being in a state of semi-collapse because of the loss of blood, could not be chloroformed and so had to stand the whole thing without the help of anæsthetics.

I went in several times to see how he was. The man only groaned deeply and fearfully but never uttered a cry, and once, when told that it was the Queen who had come to see him, he actually stretched up his lips to kiss my hand!

I did not leave till we were able to get him to bed, his arms and legs hung up so as to drive the blood back to his heart.

It was a tragic afternoon; consternation and indignation reigned in the town.

For some time they would not let me drive home, so afraid were they of a fresh attack.

And it was such a beautiful day: how was it possible that death should be hurled from that glorious, gorgeous sky?

What folly has been let loose over the earth?

It seems a priest was walking along the street, holding a small child by the hand; the child was killed, but the priest had his arm only slightly wounded. Popular superstition will have it that it's unlucky to meet a priest, how much more so therefore to walk with one in war-time!

September 13th/26th, 1916.

Early into town for hospital work. Hardly was I there than the aeroplane scare began again. Once more the blue sky was full of bursting shells, once more death streamed down upon us from the heavens. I saw something like a snow-white bird high up in the air, something that with outspread wings exactly resembled the classical symbol of the Holy Ghost, and from that almost imperceptible speck of white in the shape of a dove, from that "Taube," murder and disaster were hurled down upon innocent inhabitants peacefully walking in the streets!

Bombs fell about Cotroceni; I was not there at the time, but later on, when driving to lunch, we saw an unfortunate horse lying on the road with his legs blown off.

Now, at the first signal, all the policemen whistle, as do also the Boy Scouts, and then as many people as possible take shelter, because it's always amongst crowds and agglomerations that they throw their bombs so that as many as possible should be killed at once; this is, I suppose, the "Strafen" system.

Our poor man brought in yesterday, seemed rather better this morning, but towards evening signs of blood-poisoning set in and there is a question of amputating his leg, but even this may be too late. Horrible! And yet he is so brave; never complains and is grateful for all one does for him.

It is very difficult to get any real military news. I can find out nothing, but there is bad news from the North. On the line towards Râmnic, German troops have managed to slip in behind our army and cut off the railway: but I cannot discover how many troops, nor if this is really serious news.

Chapter VI

THE GERMAN INVASION

Buſtea, Friday, September 23rd/October 6th, 1916.

REALLY bad news came this morning. After breakfast Ballif asked to see me, and the moment I saw his face I knew I was going to hear hard things. On these occasions I feel as though I were to undergo an operation and that I must steel my nerves to the utmost.

Very bad news from the Braşov side. Our beloved country is in great danger of being invaded by the Germans ! Can any thought be more fearful ? One knows what it means ; destruction in every form—in this case also nameless humiliation. But each time, when receiving such news, my first cry is ; it cannot be, it must not be, it will not be !

The horror is that we are such babies, so unlearned in the art of war, and if the Germans really oppose great forces against us, what can we do ? We are not sufficiently armed to stand out against mass attacks. We were led to believe that they would not be able to detach great forces to send against us, that their desire and their power to punish were not one and the same thing.

Washburn, the American war correspondent of *The Times*, considers our front, and our mountain passes in particular, of paramount importance to the general cause. But not for a moment did he try to hide from me that our situation is *most* serious. I cannot help liking and trusting this queer American-speaking, little stranger. He seems to have a heart as well as unusual intelligence and wide, far-seeing perceptions. I quite realize that it is difficult to make others understand exactly why I imagine that this little man could be of use to us, but I feel it with all my instinct which does not generally deceive me. I have more often been helped than harmed by my trust in people. It

needs courage to trust people; I have that courage and am not sorry that I have it, though it may often make more cautious and distrustful people squirm. Each man can only act according to his nature; mine is one of impulse and action, my weapon is truth, with me instinct is a quality. I have always found that putting people on their honour makes them give their best, makes them act up to their higher selves. If some people have no higher self, more shame they! But I never regret having tried to get at it even if it has sometimes meant misplaced confidence. I do not mean by this that, like poor old Carmen Sylva, I am ready to confide my own and other people's secrets to the first flattering adventurer who comes along, but I maintain that at certain moments one must have the courage of confidence as well as the courage of action, because it is not always by sitting still and pondering that one wins the game!

I went into town to my hospital, where my daily morning visits are awaited with pleasurable impatience, which is the only recompense I need.

My own back is very painful, for I have caught some kind of infection. Had it bound up. Some serious operations in my hospital this morning. One poor gipsy, when under chloroform, began to declaim patriotic speeches, he spoke so touchingly that he made those about him weep. He then called for me, for "Mamma Regina," who in a vague way represents all the mothers of Roumania. To me also he said curiously moving things. We get extraordinarily fond of these patient, suffering men: they are so simple and so quietly grateful for every care.

Our hospital is already very full and runs smoothly. It would be a disaster if circumstances obliged us to move. Where should we go? Where should we transport our wounded, where make a new home for them all? All day long my brain is racked with these difficult questions and finds no solution, none at all because at the bottom of my heart I can never really imagine that this could come about!

Ileana came for the first time to see the hospital and helped serve the meals to the wounded with a little white cloth on her head like those I wear: she looked too sweet

with her huge blue eyes, and all the soldiers were enchanted to see her; they love children.

As a rest, I took a ride in the woods of Buftea, galloping my beloved Grui for all he was worth. Riding remains the one thing I really passionately enjoy.

For supper I invited Washburn and asked Stirbey to come afterwards to make his acquaintance; I wanted them to know each other and to enable this interesting little man to explain his point of view, because I continue to feel that he could be useful to us.

He has been on all the fronts and has "made all the Russian retreats" as he quaintly expresses it. He has seen terrible and tremendous things, so he trembles for us.

Buftea, Saturday, September 24th/October 7th, 1916.

Spent most of the day in my hospital. Towards evening the King sent Washburn to me; they want me to write a letter to the Tsar. I did so, putting all my heart into the appeal I sent to him for help; the forces sent out against us are too strong. I have no military news to-day, I am almost afraid to ask.

In the evening Mircea and Ileana played in my room as in the days of peace; it did me good to hear their happy, innocent voices, to watch their games. What hard times these poor little things still have to see?

Mircea is such a quaint little fellow, so intensely stubborn. We always speak Roumanian together. Ileana is his slave, she adores him like a mother, and has an excellent influence over the unruly child.

The letter I wrote to the Tsar ran as follows:

24th Sept., 1916.

MY DEAR NICKY,

If I write you to-day, it is not as cousin but as Queen of a country I dearly love. We have bravely entered this war, well knowing what we were doing and that our resources are not beyond a certain limit. From all sides our Allies assured us that when we came in, such tremendous efforts would be made on all the fronts at once that we would not find ourselves fighting against forces quite beyond what we could cope with.

Now we have come to the realization that we are facing tremendous and immediate danger, and that unless we are helped *at once*, it may be

too late and we may have to experience all the horrors of invasion and destruction.

It is as a woman and as a queen that I make my appeal to you, to the man and to the Emperor! Send us the help we ask for *at once*; it is not a question of weeks but of days, or it may be too late and one more country will fall victim to the general spirit of hatred and destruction. I need not tell you that the hatred in this case would be without limit.

I am not in the least ashamed of sending you this cry for help. I am trying to save my country by every means and nothing shall I leave undone, and surely there has been already too much bloodshed and destruction: why should my innocent people also be destroyed?

I believe our military situation is most critical, for we find ourselves facing much greater forces than we were led to expect; therefore if we are not to be destroyed we must be helped, and you alone can help us and must help us, Nicky!

I ask no forgiveness for sending you this letter, Nicky, because when one stands before the greatest crisis in one's existence and when one sees the danger of the destruction of all one has built up, and all one has lived for, of all one loves, then it is one's duty to stand up and cry for help.

Your loving cousin,
MISSY.

This cry for help shows that we were in a cruel plight and that the Russians were the only Allied troops which could come to our rescue. In those days we still had great faith in the Tsar's power to help, he was the only Allied sovereign with whom we were in direct contact.

Buftea, September 26th/October 9th, 1916.

Aeroplanes continue to make ravages. Many men were killed at Chitila to-day! They do quite horrible things, these death-birds!

The King came to see me after lunch. I found him depressed; certainly there is enough to be depressed about. I tried to persuade him to go about more, he will stand things better then. If I were King I would go everywhere, see everything myself and talk to the troops, be amongst them continually, till they would adore me and gladly go to battle for my sake. I would be a reality amongst them, not a name.

War is such a tremendous reality, one must break away from old rules and conventions. What matter other people's

objections? There are occasions when one must judge for oneself, bravely face one's fate, break away from old chains, have a new freedom to do great deeds upon one's own responsibility.

Perhaps I am uttering stupidities, but I do feel so strongly that the King needs to throw off certain old bonds, old habits, all those restrictions which stifle free action. Oh! sometimes I do mind being a woman.

"Si j'étais Roi . . . !"

Whenever I came home in the evening it was my joy to be with my two little ones, Ileana and Mircea, and we used to have great games down in the big Buftea drawing-room. Mr. Denize, Nicky's tutor, was their great friend. He had endless patience with children and knew how to amuse them. Nicky tyrannized over Denize, who could never be really severe with him. Nicky seemed to have quicksilver in his blood, he could never keep still.

But one day Mircea awoke not feeling very well. I am not an anxious nor a fussy mother, but in this war atmosphere everything becomes poignant, terrible, and I looked with uneasiness at my beloved little boy, though at first I would not believe that he was really very ill.

The pages that follow are full of intolerable pain. I wrote everything down day by day, but I only give extracts because the reading is too sad.

At the same time there was very bad news from the front, disaster at Turtucaia, our people fluctuating between fear and hope. The emotions of a crowd are always violent, swinging over from one excess to another; it is difficult to steady public opinion, to keep panic away, or over-exaggerated rejoicing of which the reaction is often despair.

I felt all this, but for the moment I could not step in and help; everybody was too excited, too rudderless, they *had* to give way to their tumultuous feelings.

I often visited the King at Head-quarters and made the acquaintance of the different foreign generals and envoys.

Chief amongst these was General Berthelot, head of the French military commission sent to help us. General Berthelot was a cheerful, portly gentleman, full of refreshing

optimism. I liked him straight away, but I saw at once that he would have much to learn before he could understand our Roumanians and the exact situation. I longed to explain certain things to him, but realized that it was too early, he would have to discover them for himself. Besides, how could he at once believe in me, a woman! He could not know that I knew more than most, that I was well-informed and that just because I had so to speak, a back seat, I could see more clearly than those who received only official reports. But I had to bide my time, look on, be patient and grit my teeth and be prepared to face the worst.

Colonel Ballif had all-seeing eyes and he gave me solid military advice, sometimes hard and dreadful, but always terribly to the point.

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Chapter VII

I LOSE MIRCEA

Buſtea, Monday 10th/23rd, October, 1916.

SALUT à toi, malheur, quand tu viens seul ! But misfortune never comes alone, it comes in numbers to try and see how much one can bear : Mircea has typhoid fever—I was afraid it was this, and it is ; he is very ill and the Dobrugea is nearly lost to us, Constantza has been taken, our own people have blown up the big bridge over the Danube, King Carol's dear bridge, the love of his heart ; the bridge before which Auntie used to remain in ecstasy each time we travelled on the Danube.

What the losses have been I do not know, but the situation is intensely serious ; again they begin talking about evacuation.

One blow came after another. I sat quite still wondering how much a human creature can stand at a time.

Evacuate with Mircea in this state ? Go I know not where, I know not how, and the child in this state ?

But sometimes trouble comes over one with such force that one feels quite numb, as though nothing could hurt one any more.

Yet, desperately I go on hoping ; children do not always die even when fever rages for many days. I always hope in adversity, it is my nature to have hope and faith and trust.

Only one thing I have noticed ; in this time of war and disaster such dying is passing over the earth that those who are ill seem to go more easily, as though the spirit of life were actually overcome by the spirit of death.

Had moments of intense moral suffering. Nando came to dinner, his version of the military situation was a degree less bad than the one Bratianu sent me ; but all is to be feared.

Unbearable to see Mircea lie there a helpless little heap with glassy, staring eyes, and not knowing whether he recognizes me or not. The first days he still protested, was loud in his likes and dislikes, could even joke, had certain jokes he produced especially for me because he knew they amused me; he had a certain way of saying "Pfui docco!" to the doctors, which was my delight. . . . He no more says "Pfui docco!"

What is going to happen? Is my child to be taken from me? How can one stand it? How does one stand just this one thing?

Buŧtea, Tuesday, 11th/24th October, 1916.

Mircea seems to be sinking, even after wet towels his temperature has gone up. He no more talks or professes any likes or dislikes.

May God help me; I am trying to prepare myself to face it if it has to be.

Constantza is lost; but the bridge, it seems, has not yet been blown up. Berthelot says we can and must hold out.

Buŧtea, 12th/25th October, 1916.

Day of struggle and anguish; three times my Mircea nearly slipped away.

Towards evening a ray of hope; the night was terrible.

Saw General Berthelot and had a long earnest conversation with him, as I consider that he is the man who must help us save our country; he has more experience than we have, and we must listen to him.

Told him my child was dying, that perhaps God would ask this cruel sacrifice of me; but in spite of this terrible thing which was now completely absorbing me I wanted to speak to him of my country, so that I should not lose both child and country at once!

Have not the courage to write down all our conversation, but had the feeling as though I were making my will!

Berthelot is beginning to understand that although a woman, I know what I am talking about, and that I count



MIRCEA.

for something in this country. All those who really do their duty have faith in me.

Butea, Friday, October 14th/27th, 1916.

A monstrous nightmare lies behind me. Did I live through a night, a month, a year? I hardly know.

At half-past twelve Ballif comes to call me. Like a dart I am out of bed—it was an understood thing that he should call me—and rushed to Mircea's room. I asked no questions, Ballif offers no explanations: "Son Altesse Royale va mal"—laconic, but full of cruel meaning, a promise of terror to come.

And it was terror.

I found him already half gone, he had not been able to stand his bath nor the wet sheets, the pulse was dying away and every means were being used to revive him—artificial breathing, stimulants.

From time to time a tiny result, then a fresh collapse, till at last the doctors had the feeling that all was over, nothing more to be done.

They laid him in his little bed: all white he lay there, his eyes half upturned in their sockets, their whites injected with blood. His hands and feet were icy.

I felt as if I were made of stone, no tears, no words; I was but one inarticulate prayer.

Someone whispers to me that there had better be a priest; with a dumb nod I consent.

They bring a priest, a quite simple village priest, and he gives him the Holy Communion, and there I sit and wait.

From time to time I look up at the anxious faces around me, begging for a ray of hope, but there is no hope in any eye.

We send for Nando and Carol. I first call in Miss Milne, then Elisabetta, then Mignon.

Little by little shadows gather round his bed. I do not turn to see who they are, but all those who come are, I know, loving and full of anxious sympathy. Once good portly Denize leans over me and says: "He's sleeping." Denize is short-sighted and the light was faint, he really

thought he was sleeping. Beside Denize straight and silent, Captain Georgescu, the officer of my regiment who has been attached to me, stands as though on guard; they all want to have a last look at the dying little innocent. I hear women's sobs, but I myself have no tears . . . and so the hours drag on.

We had lighted a taper at his side, a holy taper; it burned steadily beside two pink roses Nicolas had sent in to his brother that morning.

There is a commotion—Nando and Carol have arrived from Scroviste, they come into the room, both quite wet with the thick mist which had made their way agonizingly slow: a dreadful drive that must have been through fog and darkness, at the dead of night with fear in their hearts.

And the hours drag on. . . .

A kind voice whispers to me that it may still last many many hours, will I not go to bed?

I have no will to rise from my chair—I feel I must sit there on and on as long as he breathes.

The doctors bend over him, feel his pulse, say that it is less weak, that it can last . . . probably will last, and again voices urge me to go bed.

Stiffly I rise to do so, for perhaps if I rest, others will also rest, but can there be any rest when one's brain is so full of suffering?

And yet I did sleep and in the morning at seven they tell me that he is better, that the temperature has gone down suddenly, too suddenly! It may mean that last night was the crisis, but it may also mean the beginning of the end.

But the improvement maintained itself, only there is no clearness in his head, no recognition in his eyes, great torpor, complete indifference, and this makes me anxious.

I feel like a ghost walking about; all is stiff in me, my brain, my heart, my limbs; even my tongue seems unwilling to speak, because the things I would have to say are things that hurt me too much.

But I am quite calm, I do not know why I am so calm.

My four ladies came to lunch, for I thought it unkind not to see them, but when I am suffering I like being alone.

I do not want to talk, I have nothing to say, all my strength must be used to suffer decently without upsetting others, without making a fuss.

The day dragged on with no better news and no worse. I did nothing all day but wait and hope and fear.

Between the 23rd and 29th October there was a slight improvement in Mircea's condition and I even had the courage one day to dash down to a village near the Danube to visit my regiment. They let me know that they would soon for the first time be under fire and wanted to see me before, if possible, to receive my blessing.

It was a long way, on difficult roads, and I was torn by the fear of leaving Mircea for several hours, but at the same time how could I fail to answer the call of my regiment? We meant so much to each other and they wanted to see me.

So I went. . . .

It was a terrible drive, a poignant meeting, in a little village, all the men hidden away in the peasants' houses, but the news of my coming spread like wild-fire and the whole regiment assembled, and as I passed down their ranks I wished them good luck.

Then back I rushed over endless roads towards sunset, the sky a blaze of colour, a stupendous sight, an angry but magnificent sky, burning red and orange streaked with cruel-looking clouds, a sky well in keeping with the anguish of my soul. Then the return to the house, Mircea deadly pale—my heart stopped beating, but he opened his eyes and looked at me; Mircea was still alive.

Bufta, Sunday, October 16th/29th, 1916.

My forty-first birthday! And what a beginning to it! After a terrible night passed between anxiety and hope, at seven (or was it even six o'clock!—I really no longer know which), I go in to his room to find Mircea almost gone. As usual they bring him back to life and I am able to go down to breakfast to receive kind words, but, thank God, no congratulations; everybody feels that congratulations would be impossible.

The moment I can escape, I dash up to see how he is, find him just a wee bit better but always that ghastly cry, those terrible sightless, upturned, bloodshot eyes. They assure me that he will anyhow live on a few hours, that without too great fear I can rush into town to my hospital; and I actually have that extraordinary courage; I only have it because these days I feel of stone, as though the terrible anguish had dried up part of me.

At the hospital, flowers, flowers and anxious faces. I smile at them but I cannot talk, I ask them not to talk, tell them that I cannot bear words. I make my round of the wounded my arms full of flowers, my birthday flowers, I leave whole packets on each bed. Kind eyes everywhere and each soldier murmurs with his thanks a wish for the health of "Prințul Mircea."

I don't feel my body, I only know that I smile, continue to smile, but my lips are too stiff to talk, and thus on, on, from bed to bed as though there would never be an end to those many beds. . . .

Poor General Dragalina who has been brought to my hospital is in great pain for his arm is infected; they are to operate on him this morning and are afraid he will have to lose his arm.

After my visit to the wounded who this day gave me as much sympathy as I gave them, I had to go up somewhere to be "congratulated" by the ministers. They too avoid many words; the room is full of flowers, beautiful flowers, but my only thought was "perhaps they will be laid on a grave."

I made supreme efforts for an hour and a half, then I flew to my motor and dashed home. What a pace we went! I shut my eyes, the wind beat and tore at me—was I alive or dead, or was I a ghost or simply dreaming?

On returning to Buftea I dashed up the stairs to find my child nearly gone, his pulse was giving out; again I stood in the presence of death, but once more the doctors forced back its shadowy, outstretched grasp, forced the poor little sufferer back to life!

I cried out to them to let him go, that the torture was beyond my strength, let him go! It's so easy to go and so difficult to remain, and each time my heart dies with him

and the moment hope filters back it is killed anew by a fresh crisis which threatens to carry him off.

I cannot, cannot stand any more, and those poor eyes, and that dreadful cry!

He cannot live and he cannot die, it is a ghastly fight. But my own strength is leaving me; I feel as though I could stand no more, no more of those dreadful moments, poring over his changed little face, being told that all is at an end, that there is no more hope, that he is going . . . that he is nearly gone, and then again a ray of hope.

I have much less courage to-day somehow; I cannot sit in his room and hear him scream. Six days of this mortal anguish has nearly worn my resistance away.

For two hours this afternoon I lay like a dead thing on my bed, unable to go into that room of pain. Yet they say that he does not suffer . . . but I, I suffer till I can no more.

Maruka came to me, it did me good: Maruka is one of the only people I can stand.

I could not go down to dinner, I could face no more inquiring eyes to-day.

And yet as it was my birthday I wanted as many people as possible to have a treat in spite of my grief. Each man must carry his own grief and burden others as little as possible, so I gave orders that my regiment on the front should receive wine and good things to eat, that the village children of Buftea should be given cakes, that my wounded in the hospital should have some extra treat. I sent money and flowers to the ladies helping in the poorer hospitals so that a little joy should be given to those who have not the luck of being in bigger hospitals.

I must not forget that I am "Mamma Regina," not only Mircea's mother.

But the dreadful struggle lasted several days more, and on November 2nd this is what I wrote:

Buftea, Thursday, October 20th/November 2nd, 1916.

There are two beings living in me just now, one who watches and sees and another who suffers. Because of these two beings I am able to write down all these words.

This last night was less bad than we expected and this morning his state is no better and no worse than it was yesterday.

The little fellow continues his heroic battle against death. No sign of consciousness, the eyes still like dead eyes. He screams no more, but for two days he has an incessant movement of the jaw, clacking and grinding his teeth.

Midday.

I think he is sinking. The doctors say nothing, but I think he is sinking. . . .

Afternoon.

He is sinking, now I feel sure he is going . . . going soon. . . .

Evening.

Mircea died at nine, his hand in mine.

It is "Allerseelen." . . .

. . . All Souls Day.

We buried Mircea in the old Cotroceni church. The trees in the court-yard had shed all their leaves.

We carried him away from Buftea and the Stirbeys were angels of kindness. The Prince had a quiet way of doing things, never many words, only efficient help, but you feel that he is suffering with you.

Silence alone could make me bear my grief.

The church was full of white chrysanthemums and lighted tapers. Many people crowded around me, the church was crammed, but I recognized no one. The little coffin, which I had wrapped round with an old piece of red and golden brocade, was let down beneath the stones of the church. I knelt beside the gaping hole. Everything was dead in me, and when I stepped out again into the daylight I felt like a ghost, and all the faces looking at me were the faces of ghosts. The whole world was dead.

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Chapter VIII

EVACUATION IN SIGHT

UNABLE for a time to bear my usual surroundings I decided to make a tour through Moldavia to visit the wounded.

I took with me Nini, Mircea's nurse, and also Madame Mavrodi and Ballif. It was already very cold, but in those days I only possessed an open motor, a heavy Mercédès which was not without defects, so my long drives of inspection were often very exhausting.

I began my tournée at Jassy, which was glad to receive me.

*Thursday, October 27th/November 9th, 1916.
3rd day in Moldavia.*

Started at eight to see the hospitals at Roman. Visited three of them and found several lady acquaintances, all of them bravely doing their duty.

From there to Bacau along a very straight road passing many villages. Russian troops in quantities, met almost only Russian troops, most picturesque. Their uniforms are dust or mud-coloured, mingling completely with the tint of the roads, the bare hills and the peasant huts. Arrived at Bacau where I also visited three hospitals in which I found many severely wounded. From Bacau on towards Tetcani, very pretty country winding slowly upwards, wild and picturesque scenery well in keeping with the Russian troops that were massed in all the villages. They looked quite at home, cooking their food, brushing down their horses, cleaning their rifles, singing.

They wear large grey astrakhan caps and very short blouses with a leather belt. They have thick, earth-coloured overcoats (the colour of dry earth). Mostly they are quite

well dressed and seem to have horses in plenty. They look prosperous. We also met a certain number on foot driving great herds of cattle. We had lunch at Tetcani, unpacking our own provisions which we shared with the Russian general who had his quarters in this house dear to Maruka's heart, and of which she had so often told me, but where I had never been. Then on again to Comanesti where General Prezan and his staff have their quarters. Had a long military talk with him. He seemed contented and optimistic.

They sing strange, mournful, solemn chants whilst they march, first all the bass voices together, then the treble and baritone break in taking up the same refrain. It is very impressive and rather lugubrious.

From Comanesti drove to Targu Ocna, a very picturesque little town situated high above the river Trotuş; part of the road was excruciatingly bad.

There is a fine old church in this town surrounded by strong walls like a fortress high above the edge of the river, the whole of it in a rather ruined condition, but most picturesque.

Here also I visited a hospital which had been arranged in the Town Hall. Amongst others I saw a man, a woman and a child wounded by an aeroplane that had just passed. I asked the mother who was lying all huddled up on her face, what was the matter with the child, and she answered :

"Its leg has remained in the house."

I bent over the child, a sweet little creature about five years old, with a mass of black curly hair, who was also lying on its face. I gave it some chocolate and it actually turned round and kissed my hand! I stroked its head, it was such a dear little child; then I discovered that it was shaking with fever, its teeth chattering together.

The sight of a suffering child is unbearable to me. I cannot stand it so I fled like a coward.

On our way between Targu Ocna and Adjud we had a motor accident. We were going at a good pace when an ox-cart driving ahead of us suddenly crossed the road just at the moment when we were passing. Tremendous smash-up; the cart flew into a hundred pieces, our motor flew into

the ditch where happily the chauffeur was able to stop it without its capsizing. Madame Mavrodi, who was with me, was hurled off her seat, hurting her leg, the peasant and the boy who were in the cart were projected up into the air; in fact everything flew, but luckily no one was really hurt except the cart. The oxen even began peacefully to feed upon the over-turned hay, whilst the dazed boy who looked very stupid kept rubbing the back of his head. Some money and many good words put things straight again; we handed the shaken peasants over to some soldiers passing that way and off we drove, our motor hardly the worse, but my poor old Mavrodi suffering rather badly from her knee and ankle.

We were in an open car and it was decidedly cold. An early moon had risen, glorious and huge, night came on rapidly and the moonlight upon the river was lovely; the valley is broad, hills in the distance, clouds hung over them. The world looked vast, endless, lonely; it was like advancing at a great speed through a strange dream.

Finally in complete darkness we arrived at Adjud, a tiny little town where there is a large Red Cross organization, not in a hospital, but provisional beds arranged in different houses.

Although I arrived quite unexpectedly I was glad to find ladies and doctors alike faithfully at their posts. It all made a good impression upon me. Young Leonté, the surgeon, is the chief doctor there, and seems to be an efficient leader. All the wounded were serious cases.

I wandered about amongst the many beds in a queer half-light. This too was like a dream, but what was very real was the suffering and also the joy that everybody felt when they saw me. Everywhere I distributed little gifts. Here I had strongly the impression of a real war hospital, as everything was improvised, and the half-light and the low whitewashed rooms made it all strangely mysterious and somehow unreal.

I saw nothing but suffering, suffering, suffering, which did not lighten my heavy heart.

From Adjud I went back to my train, and in the night travelled back to Buftea.

Buftea, Friday, October 28th/November 10th, 1916.

Coming back was not easy, but I must begin my old life again, though everything hurts me. I went to my hospital. I moved about amongst my wounded. I must not selfishly shut myself up in my grief.

Made my usual round, but something is changed in me, something that never, never can be the same again.

I utter kind words, I give advice, I smile and listen to complaints, but my own sorrow shuts me up as in a cover of aloofness; it is I who move and act and think and speak, and yet it is someone I am not yet accustomed to live with, someone who used to be uncrushably buoyant and now has something broken, someone who believed in the joy of life through all adversity and who now feels a ghost amongst men, separated from them by some impenetrable atmosphere of sorrow that nothing can pierce.

My Mircea is dead; can anything be ever the same any more?

Oh, I shall do my duty, I shall help others, I shall console them, feed them, clothe them, wipe their tears. I shall even lead them if it is necessary, go before them and show them the way—but it is not the “me” of yesterday that they will be following, it will be a stranger who knows not herself.

Buftea, Sunday, October 30th/November 12th, 1916.

Yes, I must learn to live again, but I always seem to be waiting for something, something that cannot come, that will never come . . . never, never.

But at least I can do my duty, for there is such a lot to do, and I shall do all I can bravely. Only I do it differently now, like one separated from life, one who has no share in what she is doing.

I feel doubly tender towards all those who suffer, but it is as though my soul touched them, not my heart.

Had a small church service for the soldiers in my hospital. I stood amongst them. For the first time in praying for the royal family his name was not amongst them: “Carol, Elisabetta, Nicolai, Ileana, Mignon and . . .” The dear

name was no longer uttered. It is no more necessary to pray for you, my Mircea, my child, my baby . . .

Saw Lady Barclay, wife of our British Minister. A big English hospital is coming here: they asked the Queen to give it a name, so I gave it that name which is no more pronounced when they pray for the other five, the name I loved, Mircea!

So I learnt little by little to live without my Mircea, to bear the unbearable.

Work was my solace, I worked and worked endlessly, and tried with all my might, in spite of my own despair, to keep hope alive in every heart. But things were going from bad to worse.

One day at Buftea there was a terrible air-raid. Having discovered where I lived (for I was considered the chief enemy) the Germans came to bomb my house. That day I just happened to have gone alone with Ballif to Bucarest, leaving all my children at home, and on arriving at my hospital I received the disquieting news that Buftea had been attacked.

Luckily Prince Stirbey, who always thought of everything, had had a sort of cellar-retreat made, which on this occasion and on a few others later on, became very useful.

About a hundred bombs were thrown and many of the windows of the house were blown out, a bomb went through the roof of one of the out-buildings; and in many places the trees of the park were torn to pieces, but there was only one casualty, a gardener boy killed in front of the house.

Princess Stirbey and two of her daughters who were running a canteen at the station for passing troops, had to fly for their lives and hide in a cornfield.

Nicky, always witty and funny, described to me afterwards how amidst a cascade of broken glass he had, in a sitting position, slid down the slippery open stairs to reach the "funk hole" as quickly as possible, an avalanche of hurrying people, scurrying and slipping behind him to find safety in the cemented retreat.

Luckily I heard of the raid after it was over; but it

was difficult to get back to Buftea as the aeroplanes were hovering over the road along which I had to drive.

The children were more excited than frightened, but all the same it was a horrid experience.

On this occasion the Pope telegraphed to me :

Nous félicitons Votre Majesté d'avoir échapper au grave danger qu'elle a courru et formons des voeux pour son bonheur, et le bonheur de la famille Royale.

BENEDICTUS PAPA XV.

Cruel news was reaching us from every side, daily it grew worse and there were continual rumours of evacuation. I worked relentlessly, hardly ever knew an hour's rest.

Every day I visited another hospital ; it is all written down from day to day, also the growing anxiety and how I tried to keep panic off as much as possible.

Many things made me very unhappy, I saw how many mistakes were being committed, but my people were not yet ready to be helped. There was confusion around me, but for the moment my hands were tied, my voice could not reach them.

Buftea, Tuesday, November 8th/21st, 1916.

Alas, our military situation is excessively painful and precarious ! Our beloved Oltenia is undefendable ; that beautiful part of our country is invaded, and has to be given up to the enemy. It is unbearable, yet it seems it has to be ; the richest, most beautiful, most Roumanian part of our land.

And such things have to be borne. My one prayer was that my beautiful Horez, that lovely white convent, might escape ; now they say that there are battles just there, so no drop of bitterness is to be left untasted. Are they going to destroy that corner of peace chosen of my heart and which I so loved that I asked to be buried there when my time came ?

Went early into town with Ballif and Nicky, visiting General Petala on the way, who is in the Elisabetha Sanatorium with broken-down nerves after having admirably done his duty for two and a half months amongst almost impossible difficulties.

Too continual efforts were asked of his strength. He was first in the Dobrugea, then on the Olt. He behaved exceedingly well, holding together insufficient and timorous troops.

Found him better than I expected, very eager to talk, quite clear about what he had to relate, many sad unsatisfactory things, and few pleasant ones, alas!

Poor man, he has seen hard times, gradually relinquishing many hopes, many illusions, even the one of being physically capable of superhuman efforts. It must have been fearful when he felt that his memory was giving way; he said that there had been a moment when he actually could not remember where his troops were. Then he realized that he was breaking down.

He was so interesting that I would have liked to talk to him much longer, but I was afraid of exciting him, afraid also of fatiguing his over-tired brain. Many of the things he related to me were exactly what Ballif had told me some time ago.

Buftea, Wednesday, November 9th/22nd, 1916.

Decided to go off with Ballif and Madame Mavrodi by motor to Câmpu-Lung to see how far I can go and in what condition I shall find the hospitals, the wounded, the troops, the population. A mild day, but mud on the road so terrible that it much hindered our advance as it choked our car and made it heat, so that more than once we had to stop.

However we reached Câmpu-Lung about one o'clock, having started punctually at nine.

There I found a hospital for "first aid," by far the most painful to see. The wounded were just being brought in straight from the trenches—wretched, miserable, tattered pieces of humanity, all bloody in their torn and dirty uniforms, infinitely more pathetic thus than in their beds, as here I saw them in all their exhausted misery.

Some were but slightly wounded, some seriously, others had frozen feet, and two were dying with fractured skulls. They lay in their litters as they had been carried away from the battle-field. Their faces were livid and the sinister

sound of their death rattle filled the room. I went about amongst the wounded talking to them and distributing my modest gifts. The soldiers fully realized who I was and I saw how happy they were that I had come to search them out so near the front, here in this far-away little hole.

I also hunted for General Cotescu who is in command of them, with another general whose name I do not remember.

They were delighted and astonished to see me so unexpectedly. As I sat in my motor talking to them, aeroplanes began circling over our heads, so I was invited into the house. Profiting by the few minutes under cover I tried to take some of the mud from the road off my face.

Here things were going pretty satisfactorily, and the enemy were being kept at bay, but the effort and exertion are fearful and the troops suffer much.

The boom of the cannon followed us part of the way back, for it seems the enemy is also invading the other valley, the one behind Curtea de Arges.

We lunched somewhere on the road, disturbed by aeroplanes so that once we had even to take refuge under a bridge. We also had several *pannes* on the road due to the mud getting into our machine. We arrived about half-past four at Pitesti where I visited more hospitals, going from bed to bed of hundreds of wounded. Poor things! I saw dreadful suffering and so many patient, pain-filled eyes. Everybody is pleased to see me, doctors, sisters, wounded; they feel less forsaken, less in danger, less unprotected when I suddenly appear in their midst.

After two hours spent amongst these poor creatures, started off home; a beautiful mild night, overhead the stars made innumerable intricate patterns over the sky. A still, windless night, our drive would have been pleasant had it not been for the mud that caused many a *panne* so that we did not arrive at Buftea till ten-thirty. Here they had had an idiotic day with aeroplanes overhead so that most of their time was spent in the cellar.

Buftea, Thursday, November 10th/23rd, 1916.

Managed to get off early into town undisturbed by aeroplanes. Weather mild, sky cloudy; the death-birds prefer

a glorious blue sky. The military news is as bad as can be, so bad that I do not even talk of it, as even words seem to hurt. All is going wrong, we are beaten, the Germans are at Craiova, all our beautiful Oltenia is lost to us. The Russians do not begin their offensive. I do not know what is going to happen; I didn't even try to see Nando: "Un grand malheur s'apprend toujours assez tôt."

Came home for lunch with Bratianu and the Stirbeys. Poor little Ileana was not feeling very well, but she was sweet, she always is sweet.

Had the courage to take a ride. Since Mircea's death had an almost morbid dislike of the idea of getting on a horse, my favourite exercise, so decided to break this aversion. Galloped on my favourite Grui Sănger, but the weight at my heart was almost intolerable. Towards evening I drove all along to Mogosoia to see Marthe, who was in bed. Very poignant conversation, both of us very sad, but of the two, I was still the more hopeful in spite of my state of grief. She was very pretty in her old red damask bed, in the quaint, simple room surrounded by old icons and tastefully disposed objects, her fine hair unbound and her large eyes appealingly pathetic. Yes, to-day she was quite the beautiful and fascinating Marthe. Drove sadly home through dark and storm. Marthe wants to remain here if we have to evacuate, but a Queen cannot be taken prisoner. Marthe wants to taste every experience for the sake of literature, even occupation under the Germans.

Bufta, Friday, November 11th/24th, 1916.

A day of growing anxiety, bad news from all sides. The Bulgarians are at Zimnicea; they are marching towards Bucarest and in less than two days they can be here. This time it really means flight, and all the accompanying despair.

Somehow, I take it quietly, awful as it is. Before the inevitable, before disaster, what can one do? I hoped and hoped, in spite of everything I did not believe that it would come to this, but it has come, and it must be faced as all else has been faced, one trial after another.

Saw several people at my hospital to-day, some Belgian

officers, then old Admiral Fournier and a dozen French nurses he has brought with him and finally a Russian general.

I liked Admiral Fournier and got on with him extremely well; a clever, first-rate old gentleman of seventy-five, full of life, intelligence and keenly interested in everything. We quickly became friends and had some interesting conversations that I am too weary to recount.

Curious situation, absolutely desperate. In a short time we may have no land left at all, and yet I cannot feel as though everything were lost. It is probable that to-morrow our fate will be decided—that to-morrow will mean flight.

It seems incredible that it should come to this, but it has!

Later.

I know many things which I cannot talk about. Sometimes it is desperate to be a woman, for a woman is not supposed to be able to help, and yet sometimes she can see a situation with painful clearness, and now I know that we shall have to flee! Yes, it has come to this!

Both Ballif and Stirbey have returned from Head-quarters to tell me this. I am to say nothing about it to-night, but to-morrow early I must go into town, and whilst I am away Ballif will have the whole house packed up and ready to start in the evening.

Yes, it has come to this, we must flee!

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NICKY AND ILEANA.

Chapter IX

FLIGHT TO JASSY

Saturday, November 12th/25th, 1916.

Written in the train.

SO it has come to this—I am to run away! But let me tell things in their right order; they are so simply tragic that it is worth while relating them as they came about.

The programme decided upon yesterday was faithfully carried out, and if ever there has been a painful day, this was one to the full, I can even say to overflowing!

At nine o'clock I drove to Head-quarters to say good-bye to the King who had had no time to come to me; I also wanted to arrange about Carol going to the front. We had some tragic conversations, when I said all I had to say, but when we parted it was calmly, as though we were not standing on the brink of such terrible events. We were parting; when and how and where we shall meet again lies in the hands of God. Then off I drove into town.

Here cruel scenes awaited me in my hospital. The bad news had spread and my invalids were being evacuated, many were already gone, an atmosphere of panic was rapidly rising, and there were anxious faces and red eyes and painfully inquiring smiles.

I myself was terribly upset. No one knew as yet that we were leaving, but as my wounded were being taken from the hospital it gave me a pretext for saying good-bye to them.

Desperately sad scenes took place in the officers' room; I sat on a small stool between the beds of the two most severely wounded, each holding one of my hands and all

of us were weeping as though we had been quite old friends. Ileana's little friend, Bulgaras, was in a state of despair at leaving: the terror of the hardships of the transport and the fear of being taken prisoner if they remained made them all half frantic; all barriers were broken down, each man gave vent to his inner feelings, each one bemoaning what was happening, each according to his character, his education, his state of nerves. And I sat amongst them finding no word of real consolation because I was perhaps hardest hit of all. Finally I hid my head in my hands and wept. At that they suddenly all became men again, each one feeling that he must console this desolate woman—their Queen.

At last I had to tear myself away, knowing that it was a final good-bye. They clung to my hands thanking me, saying they would never forget what I had done for them and before leaving I took our little Bulgaras, our so grievously suffering child of the hospital in my arms and kissed him, and then rushed out of the room.

Incredible moral torture met me at every step.

The next agony was the parting from Cotroceni, the house which had been mine for twenty-three years, the house I have improved and decorated, been proud of and loved. And yet all had to be done unemotionally as we were not supposed to say that we were there for the last time.

The hardest parting was still to come, the parting from my poor little grave.

"Yes, my Mircea, I left you, left you all alone beneath the cold stones of the old church. Mircea, I have forsaken you, only you of all my children, you the youngest I have left all alone! And yet, Mircea, little boy, perhaps from somewhere you are smiling down upon me understanding as none of us do here, the meaning of earthly tears. Little Mircea, perhaps you are much less lonely than your poor homeless mother who dares not remain to keep watch over your grave."

And so I left him, and I left my house; I uttered no words about it, I hardly shed any tears, I only put a little

letter written in German into Steinbach's hands : " Give it to whoever will come here in my place," was all I said to him, and he looked at me with horror in his eyes :

" Werden Majestät nicht wieder kommen ? " he asked.

I answered :

" Es kann sein dass ich nicht wieder komme," and I jumped into my motor and was off !

This is the translation of the letter I gave him :

I do not know who will inhabit this house, a house that I have loved : the only prayer I ask is that they should not take away the flowers from the new little grave in the church. . . .

Tragic was also the return to Buftea ; wonders had been done in our absence, everything had been packed. I walked through desolate chambers that a few hours before had been cosy and comfortable and were now as beggars stripped of their clothes.

My very last visit was to the room where Mircea had died ; lighting a candle I stood on the spot where his bed had been and there with dry eyes remembered those days of agony when a battle of another kind had been fought and lost.

I sent all the others off before me to the train where a repast was to be served for the many people who are to make use of it, but I preferred going over for a last time to the Stirbeys' small house to share their last supper with them.

Poor things, I pitied them with all my heart : my own grief did not in the least make me insensible to theirs, and I felt with them, mourned with them, but all of us tried not to complain. We may some of us have had the thought that mistakes had been made, that our leaders had not been very clever, but does one know ?

It is no good accusing anyone, perhaps our country needs to be hard hit, perhaps we are to pass through all this misery and trouble to learn all those lessons none of us like to learn. For a moment though on reaching the train I felt as though my heart would break, but I knew that my bitterest tears were for Mircea, for Mircea, my little dead child.

The last person I said good-bye to was Prince Stirbey ; he was returning to Head-quarters to be with the King. As we clasped hands we wondered when and where we would meet again. There were no words with which to express our despair.

Sunday, November 13th/26th, 1916.

In the train.

The unknown has begun ; where am I going, for how long, for what ?

It is such a full train, all my ladies and different members of their families, Nadèjde Stirbey and her daughters, Denize and family, countless servants, endless, endless luggage. Ballif has done marvels, and Georgescu helps him valiantly.

Everybody is terribly sad.

I do not know where we are going. Nothing is settled, never in my life have I gone out thus into the unknown.

Sad awakening with many tears, I go from carriage to carriage trying to cheer up the most desperate ; cruel days indeed !

Towards luncheon-time we arrived at a station called Grajduri, where for the moment we remained, whilst Ballif has gone off with an engine to Jassy to explore the town and see where we might find habitation. A curious situation in which I never expected to be.

Prince Stirbey, who always foresees, two months ago took a little house for his family in that town.

I do not fuss—after the sorrow I have been through the trouble of where we are to go seems small.

I put myself entirely into Ballif's hands, for he will do his best and he is a real genius at arranging things. He is severe, sometimes even rather terrible to others, but to me he is an invaluable help, a devoted servant in the most noble sense of the word.

We are quite without news. Weather cold, a tremendous wind howling round our train.

We spent about two weeks in the train. Ballif was going backwards and forwards to Jassy to seek a habitation

for myself and children, which after much hunting about he found in the house of the Jassy military head-quarters. It was graciously put at our disposal, but it was only large enough for myself and children without including the King. It took, however, some time before this was settled and we continued living in our train at a station some distance from Jassy.

Sometimes I went with Ballif into town accompanied by one or the other of my children.

Nicky was a great solace during all this sad period. He was always so irresistibly funny and full of life, enjoying any situation and keeping up our spirits with his nonsense. A black cocker spaniel was eternally at his heels, a patient, long-suffering animal who was taught no end of tricks by the clever child.

Each time I went to Jassy I was overrun by people of every kind beseeching my help.

The foreign Red Cross units were at their wits' end. Jassy, at all times a small and sleepy little town, was now invaded by an inflow of Russians, who had occupied all the larger houses for their hospitals, depots, military quarters and so on. Now on the top of the first invasion came the influx from the different invaded parts of the country, including Bucarest, and all this was pouring into Jassy and the quiet inhabitants were aghast and full of protest, even slightly hostile.

And everybody came to me, the Jassyites as well as the foreigners, and each one had something to protest or complain about, and it was all I could do not to lose my head in this maddening pandemonium. I was myself a refugee with no house of my own, most of my worldly possessions left at Cotroceni, and what I had with me still packed away in great cases in the train. Besides, everybody was in a state of panic; the authorities were at their wits' ends, many had lost their heads, and even I, the Queen, had nowhere to go, so how could I help?

It needed immense grit not to despair, also it must be remembered I was still struggling beneath my own overwhelming grief.

I was quite cut off from the King, and although Prince Stirbey, who was with him, got an occasional message through to me, I was very hazy about what was going on and where the members of the Government and different authorities could be found. It was an extraordinary state of affairs, and could only be faced by remaining as calm as possible and with all my might preventing all fuss and complaints. The grief and despair of the situation was such that it almost seemed unreal, and just this perhaps made it bearable.

Nadèjde Stirbey and her four daughters were also in our train, as well as my ladies, Denize with wife and children, and many others. In the evening Nadèjde would come and read to us in my compartment. On fine days, when I did not go to explore Jassy, I would take long walks over the undulating hills behind the station. It was a strange fortnight, separated from every other event in life, a thing apart comparable to nothing ever before experienced.

We received news of the fall of Bucarest, of Nando and Carol moving slowly with Head-quarters and the retreating army into Moldavia, whilst one town after another had to be relinquished as the enemy advanced. The petroleum fields and the corn depots were set aflame.

Many trains passed through or stopped at our station, and one day we had the sad joy of discovering in one of these the wounded officers evacuated from my Bucarest hospital. The meeting was poignantly emotional and our friends wept with joy when they saw us. The children and I brought them all sorts of provisions from our stores. The train transporting them was rather miserable, but they were receiving as much care as was possible in the circumstances. Nicky was always close on my heels, thoroughly interested in my every movement, ready for every event; his heart was too young to be burdened with grief.

One day a Russian hospital train drew up at our station. It was a train organized and fitted out by my aunt, the Dowager Empress Marie; we were invited to visit it and were received by a Cossack officer who had the air of a conqueror in his picturesque uniform, a red *bashlic* floating like a pair of wings from his shoulder and his belt stuck full of daggers. He moved with springy ease and there was

something almost arrogant in his lavish hospitality. The magnificence of this Imperial train made us feel small, shabby, poor. Here there was everything in unbelievable plenty, and the superb Cossack strode through the carriages like a king in his realm. He was most amiable and every honour was shown me, but when I returned to the miserable carriages in which my officers were being transported it was with a feeling akin to humiliation.

Many months later I was to meet this officer again in terribly changed circumstances, but this will be told in its time.

One day in Jassy I made the acquaintance of a French doctor who, because of his dauntless energy, made a deep impression on me. It was my dear old Sœur Pucci who brought him to me, the same Sœur Pucci who had worked with me in the cholera camp.

Doctor Cluny's speciality was infectious diseases and I was to help him find a hospital somewhere out of town. I was being brought in contact with many people, but this man impressed me particularly and his dauntless optimism amidst the present chaos was a spur to my own energies; he was so splendid in his unselfish desire to work and help that I felt ashamed of my own faint-heartedness, ashamed also of giving way to my personal grief.

Whilst we inhabited our train, Ballif with his aide, Captain Georgescu, whom we called "little Georgie," and my invaluable housekeeper, Madame Kopkov, were putting the Jassy military house in order for us, and finally we took possession of our new habitation. They had worked like heroes!

It was a big, spacious house, not very home-like or beautiful, but it was a roof over our heads and I set about making it look as nice as possible. Ileana's room opened out from mine, and this was a consolation to me.

Now I shall return to my diary; there is too much to relate, but I pick out the essential; it is very expressive of the terrible times we were living in.

Jassy, Saturday, November 26th/December 9th, 1916.

Cold day. Endless amount of people to see, had so much to do that was not able to take a breath of air.

On every side the news is bad, and when the news is bad cowards begin to clamour.

Because I am strong, everybody thinks they can tell me all that hurts me most—"to her one can tell the truth." Oh yes, one can tell me the truth, but because I can listen to it, it does not mean that I do not suffer!

All day long my suffering seemed to grow and grow; everything I heard was intolerable, everything that I thought of was intolerable—there seems nothing to clutch on to, no hope, no relief. Each new person I saw brought me new pain till it reached a climax at dinner-time and I broke down at last in a paroxysm of grief comparable only to physical pain.

Jassy, Sunday, November 27th/December 10th, 1916.

Snow! The ground is white, but my thoughts are dark and tortured.

Have decided to go to-morrow to Head-quarters to see the King.

Received Poklevski (Russian Minister) who is leaving and is to be replaced by a general.

A lot to decide, to talk over, to put into order—grievous things that may daily get worse.

To-day, though, I am calm. I think it would be a comfort if one's heart would die, for how can one give up one hope after another and still be expected to live and even to create a new hope which one would try to share with others?

News continues to be dreadful, I do not know how it is all to end.

After lunch had a large committee for helping the refugees. Olga Sturdza and the Metropolitan were efficient and practical. But all the time I am living in an agony of uncertainty about what the next day may bring. All is pain, thoughts of the future, thoughts of the past, of which nothing is left!

And Mircea's grave is in the enemy's hands.

Who is living in our house, who is inhabiting my rooms; shall I ever go back, and if I do go back will the human heart be able to begin all over again!

Am I living in reality or in some abnormal dream? Never to know what is happening over there in that part

of the country which such a short time ago was ours ; to know nothing—nothing !

It was only about a month ago that I motored to Sinaia, Campina, Câmpu-Lung, Pitesti to visit the hospitals ! Then it was still my country, but now ? Oh, the agony of the thought ! And to think that we should consider ourselves happy if we could be sure of keeping Moldavia and not having to move from Jassy !

Before dinner saw Bratianu, a fearful interview in which I tried to persuade him that things must be more firmly taken in hand and not allowed to go *à la dérive*. In times so abnormally dreadful as war, an abnormal attitude is also permissible as long as it is strong and helpful. This is what I am trying to persuade them. It is the time for action—even autocratic action if necessary. A leading hand is needed, strong to punish or uphold. “*Eine Faust*,” as our enemies the Boches would say. I must try and persuade the King that even civil things must be put into military order. *Now is the time when it can be done.*

After dinner received the new Russian Minister, General Mossoloff, a clever, rather sly-looking court-gentleman, who has been many years in Emperor Nicky’s household, and who knows and has seen many things. I think there is going to be trouble with the Russians ; there is sure to be, now that we are so weak with our half-destroyed army and three-quarters of our country torn from us, all our riches gone !

Sad thoughts, sad realities, sad apprehensions, everything is sad, sad, sad.

Mossoloff brought me letters from Alix, Ducky and Aunt Miechen.

Chapter X

AT HEAD-QUARTERS

Zorleni, November 28th/December 11th, 1916.

I HAVE come here to Head-quarters. Ugly place, badly kept, but inside the house looks quite cosy, as some of the beautiful furniture which has been saved from Sinaia has been brought here.

It was very upsetting to see the furniture out of my gold room, and even my favourite cushions, etc., spread about just anyhow.

But I would hate to live here. The house is badly placed, the surroundings bare and badly kept.

In the train on the way here I had to see and talk to one person after another, such as Bratianu, Mossoloff and Admiral Fournier.

Arrived just before lunch. Nando in spite of our disasters remains calm. It is our first meeting since the terrible events. Carol is sad, but youth is always hopeful.

Big lunch with all the A.D.C.s, and also Bratianu, Mossoloff and Fournier. After lunch had a long talk with Nando, trying to persuade him to listen to what I had to say, to listen to all those things one does not see or hear if one lives in one's own everyday little round; tried to make him listen to the things from "outside."

I talked with all the energy of despair, till my head ached as though it must burst.

I tried to persuade him that General Prezan *must* be given a big position where he can really work, because he is the one who has the confidence of the army and the public. Also that severe measures must be taken for the civilian part of the population, because *la débâdade* is not to be stood and may become very dangerous.

Before dinner had a long, serious conversation with

General Berthelot. Was disturbed to see that he had lost some of his fine confidence, but pleased to hear that he too thought that Prezan was the man who ought to be brought forward.

Ghidigeni, Tuesday, November 29th/December 12th, 1916.

I am here in my dear Sybil Chrissoveloni's house. I came with Nando, Simky and Stirbey round about tea-time, slow drive because of tremendous fog.

My day at Head-quarters had been decidedly depressing, bad news from every side and no one gives me any hope. I confess that a feeling of immense despair came over me. I am struggling against invading floods of disaster. Nothing seems to be spared me, not even the feeling that there are many who at this time of misery are ready to throw stones at me whom they so loved. This is perhaps natural, because I am strong. And yet those really worth while look up to me and keep crying: "Help, help, help! It is *you* who must help." And because I am considered strong they overwhelm me with every hideous truth and all the terrible outlook of coming danger, of unfair play, of selfishness, of treachery, and all this I must be able to bear with my woman's heart which has already lost so much. Death would indeed be easier in comparison. And always that same cry: "Help, help. It is *you* who must help, *you* who must find ways of influencing those who need influencing, only *you* can do it."

My God, if ever woman has needed Thy help it is I! But Thou art so far above in Thy skies, so terribly far off.

But I shall try, I shall struggle on, blindly as there is no light without hope, as I find no one who can help me, on, on to the bitter end so that even if at last I am to be overcome I should fall with my face to the enemy, their Queen in spite of themselves.

I do not even dare write down all that I have heard; later perhaps when everything has been lost, or something gained, I shall write it down, but now it would need too cruel words.

Spent my morning in the hospitals of Barlad. Going amongst the wounded has become infinitely more painful; how inspire them with hope when I have so little hope

myself? Again I had the curious sensation of the burden of so many eyes upon me, but at first those many eyes, although a heavy weight, had given me the feeling that I was being uplifted instead of being dragged down; now they seemed to be like chains to my feet already shackled by too many trammels. Sometimes I feel I must cry that eternal cry: "It is enough, it is enough!" I can bear no more! One heart can only bear its own share of sorrow, not the sorrow and despair of a whole people, that is too much . . . too heavy.

Lunch at Head-quarters with, as guests, Bratianu and Colonel Ferigo, the Italian Military Attaché. Atmosphere laden with a sensation of impending disaster that cannot be averted. After lunch more talks with Nando, with Stirbey, with Ballif, and nowhere can I clearly see what I can do, no one seems to be able to give me consistent advice.

Very restful to find Sybil here in her splendidly kept hospital, with her grand confidence in ultimate success, her courage, her optimism, her sweet clean spirit, her unshakable English loyalty, her touching, devoted friendship. All this is beautiful to see like a flower growing in a swamp of mud.

Her hospital is admirable, and it is all run with their own money. She has a flock of white-dressed girls about her; this is a little island of sweet repose.

But I must not tarry here for long, I must move on, my duty is amidst turmoil and cries of distress, amidst forlorn hopes and the chaos of disorder and disorganization; that is the ground I must try to work on, that is the road upon which I must learn to advance without falling, but Oh God! ever and again the same words rise to my lips and I cry to Thee: It is enough, enough! Ask not of me more than I can bear!

Ghidigeni-Zorleni, Wednesday, November 30th/December 13th, 1916.

Awoke in Sybil's large pink and white bed after a good night, enjoyed the luxury of a delightful bath with everything around me clean, elegant, comfortable; an excellent

breakfast prettily served, appetizing food on fine china. For a moment I felt far from war and banishment, the luxurious side in me rejoiced in these very material comforts ; felt at home amongst them as a fish in water.

The atmosphere about Sybil is so extraordinarily genial and benevolent ; a quiet, harmonious unselfishness. Her great belief in things good, in happy results, in fresh beginnings, in final victory ; all this was balm to my lacerated soul, but it continually brought tears to my eyes.

Her little boy Nicky is delicious, well brought up, polite, attentive, loyal and adoring like his mother. The sight of children playing together touches me and makes me inclined to weep. I have become such a poor thing, all within me is so sore that kindness upsets me more than anything else. I love Sybil's little Nicky, he seems so much a part of her own clean self.

At ten Nando and Stirbey left for Head-quarters and I drove with Sybil and Simky to the Regina Maria motor school where they train chauffeurs for our motor ambulances.

Here also I found the right atmosphere. Jean and Sybil Chrissoveloni do things so loyally. I was touched by the way that all the men were taught to understand that it was for me, their Queen, that they were working, that it was *my* undertaking ; and through the loyalty of these two friends my blessing seemed to be lying over the whole organization. Yes, it did me good to be in a place where everything is done with such love.

These two, Sybil and Jean, work with an ideal ; may God bless their labour and allow it to prosper as it should. On the way back to Zorleni, Simky and I stopped at a station where Constance Cantacuzène had put up her wooden hospital for the wounded. We paid her a surprise visit. All meetings now are emotional ; there is too much sorrow in my heart, in all our hearts. I also noticed that those who haven't seen me since Mircea's death, think of my grief and dare not approach it, and yet long to let me know their sympathy. One goes thus through every scale of emotion so that one's eyes are never dry.

Was back for lunch at Head-quarters. After lunch weighty and difficult discussions with Stirbey, Ballif and

Carol examining the whole situation and our position towards the enemy as well as towards our rather formidable Ally, Russia ; exceedingly painful whichever way we turn, and into the bargain it seems that the Germans after their victory over our poor little country are launching into the world propositions for peace !

The first real official propositions of peace and it has even been whispered that they may have a secret understanding with Russia ! What then ? Where would *we* come in, what would be our fate ?

Everything seems full of the threat of destruction ; wherever I turn, nothing but terror, danger and pain.

And whilst we are talking here, the enemy is beating back our troops and we do not know if the Russians really, honestly mean to defend our ground !

I do not think one need look for a more tragic situation !

Zorleni-Jassy, Thursday, December 1st/14th, 1916.

Had a good night. After all it is a blessing to be able to sleep ; my capacity for healthy sleep still belongs to me in spite of all my troubles. Awoke to beautiful sunshine ; when the sun shines so gloriously one cannot help imagining that there can still be something happy in this poor old world of ours. Colonel Thomson, the English Military Attaché, and a Japanese officer, who is said to be very clever, but whose conversation except in Russian is extremely limited, came to lunch. Thomson is really and honestly heartbroken at what has happened to us. He is very fond of our country and is not quite sure that our big Allies have played fairly. Finally at half-past three I left Head-quarters with the feeling that all the same things were going to be taken more energetically in hand. The situation is almost desperate, but it could still be saved in part if we could be sure that the Russians would play up ; but will they ? This is the burning question, or is there to be false play now that we are in reduced circumstances ?

One thing is decided, Prezan is to have a bigger position, but so far as military things go, for the present we are quite in Russian hands. Everybody seems to agree that our

greatest hope lies in Nicky the Emperor, himself, and from all sides they continue pressing in upon me declaring that I must remain in close, affectionate contact with him. I shall if I can, but no one seems to realize the mental strain I am going through. Sometimes I feel as though I could stand no more, as too much presses in upon my heart, and my heart, alas, minds everything too much, feels everything too acutely.

Above all I must not lose my belief in humanity: my greatest strength came from my belief in others in spite of every disillusion. Now my belief is being sorely tried.

In the train on the way back to Jassy I had a terribly painful conversation with Ballif and Simky, after which I decided to give up the idea of having a hospital of my own. It was not easy to resign myself to this and I confess that I went through a moment of furious revolt. Ballif quietly waited till my fit of despair and indignation had passed away, then with his pitiless and relentless common sense he began building up for me a plan of how I could make myself useful, quietly, modestly, without treading on anyone's toes. It seems I must learn more and more to give everything up, everything that might be a consolation to me. In this time of misery I must expect no help but must continue helping even if I am met with ill-will. It is a hard lesson, but probably a wholesome one, only one must be strong enough to bear it and not break one's heart over it. I always imagined that I was strong, now comes the time to prove to myself if I am; perhaps my final bitterest disappointment will be to lose my illusions about myself.

Nietzsche says: "*Tu dois construire plus haut que toi même, mais il faut d'abord que tu sois construit toi-même carré de la tête à la base.*"

It remains to be seen if I am built "*carré de la tête à la base*"!

The children are happy to have me back again and it does me good to be with them. They are getting accustomed to their new surroundings.

It was about this time that I eased my heart by writing the following prayer:

A QUEEN'S PRAYER

I lift up my heart unto Thee, O God! Listen, I pray Thee, to my humble prayer.

Thou hast exalted me, Thou hast set me up in high places and hast put into my hands a power not granted to many.

Thou hast marked out for me a road, which must be my road and upon which I must walk without faltering.

Because they have to raise their heads to see me, many may believe that this road runs through nothing but sunshine, but Thou, my God, knowest of the stones which wound my feet, and of the many thorns hidden beneath the roses given to me.

Thou hast made my face to shine before the lowly of this world, Thou hast placed purple on my shoulders and a crown on my head, and Thou hast bidden me wear these as though they were not a burden.

And Thou didst say unto me: thou art chosen amongst many: be thou worthy of the honour which has been done unto thee: let thy hand be gentle, thy word full of comfort, and make of thy heart a resting-place for those who are weary and need rest.

Be up early at dawn, and at night sleep not too soundly, so as never to miss any cry that may be cried unto thee.

For thou art the mother of a people and hast been chosen to lead them towards light, and also to carry the weight of all their sorrows and even of all their joys.

Therefore, do I cry unto Thee, O my God! Give me the strength to face every fate, to overcome every fear, to breast every storm. Give me never-ending patience, O Lord, and the will to overcome every unworthy temptation; make me fearless, good and true, O Lord, so that I may stand upright through no matter what adversity.

Give me a heart strong enough to bear the sorrow of all I hear and of all that I see, brave enough not to be discouraged at the end of the long day, large enough to love even him whom no man loveth, just enough never to condemn in a hurry, merciful enough to forgive unto seventy times seven.

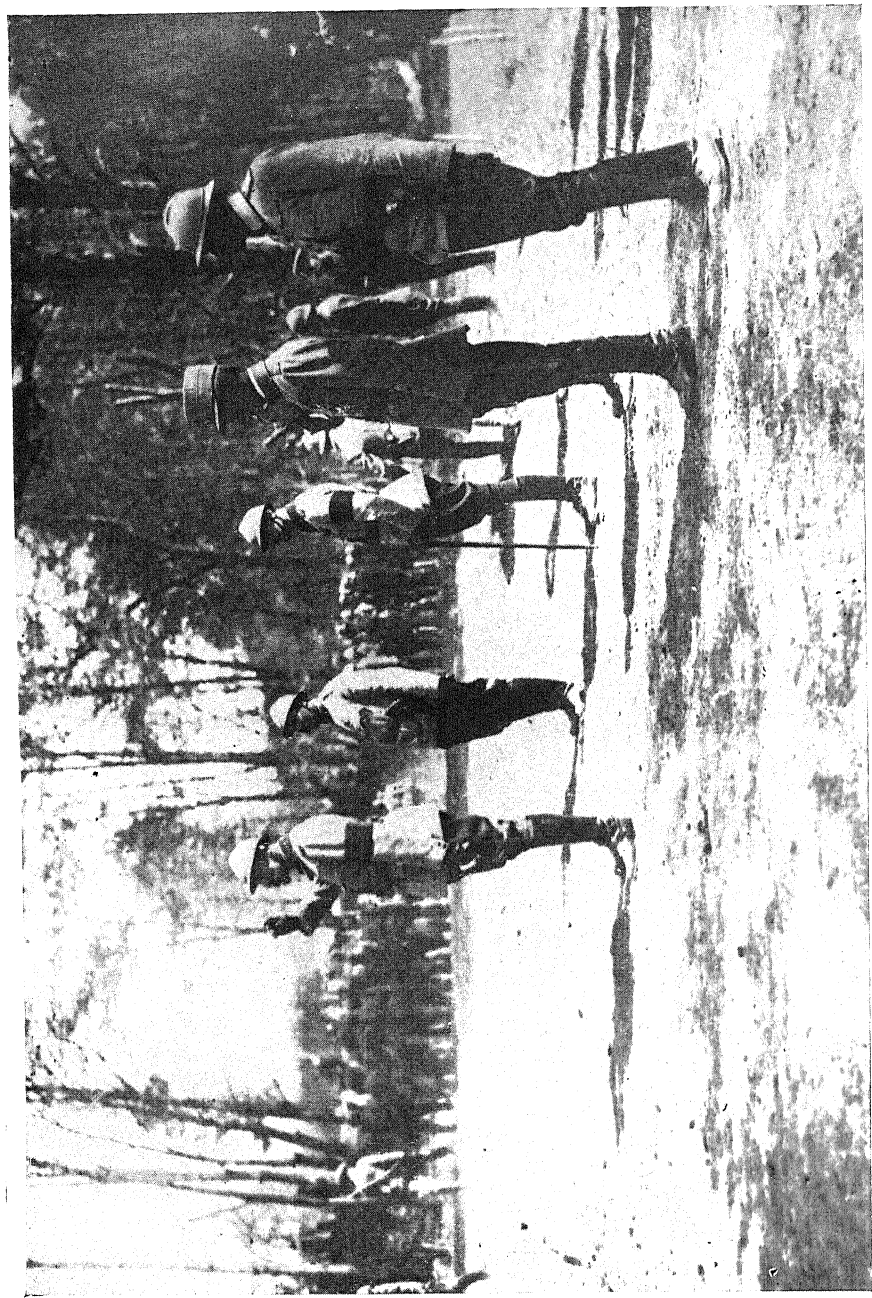
Give me the gift of words that console, O Lord, also the gift of sympathy and understanding, so that when I stretch out a hand it should not be in vain.

Allow me to hold my head high, O Lord, not in pride but because my conscience is as clear as crystal into which the sun shineth, bringing forth a thousand lights, so that I can look fearlessly into every eye.

But when my last hour cometh, O God, may it find me with no bitterness in my heart against any man, and may no one deem himself my enemy, so that, before coming to Thee, the hands which I raise in blessing, may be as light as soaring wings.

And if any remember me on earth, O Lord, may they see me with a smile on my lips, a gift in my hand, and in my eyes the light of that faith which removeth mountains.

AMEN.



THE KING AND THE CROWN PRINCE ON THE FRONT.

Chapter XI

DIFFICULTIES, MILITARY AND POLITICAL

Jassy, December 4th/17th, 1916.

DAY of wonderful sunshine, almost like a spring day, but I had no time to go out in the morning as from half-past nine onwards I never had a moment to breathe. There is a feeling of boiling effervescence in the atmosphere, which inevitably follows the horrors of retreat ; a huge struggle between good and evil, a desire of regeneration, but at the same time a sort of lame feeling which hampers all energy. I am aware of all this and all currents seem flowing towards me as though I could and must help.

After days of almost crushing discouragement and distress my fighting spirit is awaking anew ; I want to help, to work, to save what I can. I know it is an almost impossible undertaking, but faith moves mountains and I shall do all I can before I confess myself beaten.

Sent for Professor Jorga, told him that efforts must be made to uplift the general morale of the army and also of the public, and that he is the man best indicated to help me. He approved of this and is going to make a little plan of work.

Saw also any amount of other people, amongst others one of the giant English doctors from Roman. He is delighted with his work there and is full of praise of the Roumanian doctor, Mărzescu, who is their chief. An exhausting morning full of brain effort and heart-ache. I am so terribly in the midst of all the different currents of all the hopes and fears that it is difficult not to lose my head.

A short outing after lunch, and at five o'clock my audiences began again.

First I received le Marquis de Beaumont, who has come with my Regina Maria automobiles, then Monsieur Psychas,

the Greek Minister, and Madame Psychas, then the new Swiss Minister, *very* nice, and finally the Italian Minister, Fasciotti, with whom I had a serious conversation. He is an exceedingly intelligent gentleman and has all the Italian talent for intricate politics, so lacking in my Anglo-Saxon temperament. He is very insistent that the King should come and open Parliament and show himself master of the situation before the whole of his people. I shall therefore be off to-morrow by motor to Barlad to have a talk with him, as there is no time to lose.

After dinner I still had to receive old Admiral Fournier, who is leaving for Russia, and besides, I had to write a letter to the Tsar, which the old gentleman is going to take to him. Would I ever have thought that Fate would oblige me to mix up in high politics!

The French have had a big success near Woevre: of our own front I have no special news, although all that I hear does not sound reassuring.

Jassy-Zorleni, 5th/18th December, 1916.

Started early with Mignon and Ballif to have a talk with Nando at Zorleni. Three and a quarter hours' drive. Luckily not too cold, as my motor is an open one; first part of the road exceedingly bad and thick with mud. Arrived just in time for lunch.

Prezan had been invited. It gave me pleasure to see him and talk to him, as I was strongly in favour of his having the place he now occupies as Chief of the General Staff. Found him calm, energetic, in nowise disheartened in spite of terribly difficult situation. He is tactful, conciliatory, and shares my opinion that everything must be done to keep up good feelings between the Russian and Roumanian armies. In fact we agreed about most things.

Found the King well disposed. He had had long talks with Prince Stirbey, and was therefore somewhat prepared for the questions I came to discuss with him.

He read me a nobly conceived letter he had written to Bratianu. In this letter he expresses his intention of coming to Jassy to open Parliament himself and that in his address he intends mentioning his desire of forming a National Coali-

tion Government in view of the necessity of the present situation and of declaring his desire to see the agrarian question solved by the distribution of land to the peasants.

At half-past three received General Zaharoff, a rather shabby-looking little man, who speaks very bad French. Not prepossessing as so many Russians are, no *charme slave* about him! But he is supposed to be a good military man, which after all is the principal thing. It cannot be said that he is particularly encouraging; he recognizes that our situation is most serious and that our frontiers are impossibly difficult to defend, but it is to be supposed he will do his best; his honour is concerned as well as our safety! I must cling to faith and hope—all that remains to me!

Ardent discussions at lunch, Carol very sure of his opinions. Vintila Bratianu, our Minister of War, was also there; he is very like his brother, only smaller and less brilliant. A three hours' drive home, the motor going well; we reached Jassy at about seven, which made the journey there and back six hours' motoring in very keen, not to say cold, air.

Mignon was quite exhausted, but I can stand these long drives without exhaustion as long as I can keep warm. Still plenty to do after dinner. Got to bed at about eleven.

Jassy, Tuesday, December 6th/19th, 1916.
St. Niculae.

The Tsar's and our Nicky's name-day. Went to the Metropolitan Church for a Te Deum, which lasted two hours and a half; I had no idea what I had let myself in for. Stood all the time, my feet getting colder and colder, but the service was well done, quiet order and dignity, the singing good. Part of the prayers were in Russian, and there was a Russian cantor who had a prodigious voice marvellously under his control. He had a way of augmenting its volume very gradually, till one was overcome with wonder at the degree of strength he could reach. There is something awe-inspiring about such a voice; it is one of the world's wonders; it makes one's heart beat.

Had no time to give audiences this morning because of the long church service.

After lunch, as it was Nicky's name-day, I let him drive me about in his "baby" Peugeot, which we call "Bambino," as nothing gives him so much pleasure as to drive me about, and it must be confessed that this innocent form of amusement enchants me. Something of the child has always remained at the bottom of my heart, and to go off like that *à l'aventure* delights me; it is a sort of relaxation after an over-dose of serious work. We started off, Ileana seated on my knees, and went to visit my wounded officers who are now being looked after in the Red Cross hospital. Nicky had brought them his name-day cake. We also looked into all the other rooms and talked to most of the wounded. Here we also saw the girl heroine, Catherina Theodoroiu.

Then we gave Ileana over to Nini and Nicky and I continued exploring the town in "Bambino," who did not always behave as he should. We had several absurd stop-pages in the middle of unknown side streets which caused the agglomeration of many little Jewish children who stared at us till we were able to start off again.

Jassy, Wednesday, December 7th/20th, 1916.

Day full of thought and doubt and struggle. Everyone comes to me, with their different convictions, with their hopes, their sympathies and their hatreds. And I must listen and try to judge and to be impartial and not lose my head.

First old Ferikidy came to see me and then Demètre Grecianu, and finally Bratianu, who has guessed that I am trying to bring about a certain change in the existing state of affairs. We had a lengthy and not exactly pleasant conversation, it was in fact the clashing of two strong wills, which ought to work together and not oppose each other. I felt his strength and that he had no intention of playing second fiddle, but I bravely stood up for what I felt I must fight for. I had to admit to myself that he was far cleverer than I was, but he will have to concede that I am right in certain things. This will, however, be very difficult as he is accustomed to rule and knows that no party is as strong as his. Being a real fighter myself, I appreciated the cleverness of his every move. I cannot, however, say that it was a satisfactory interview.

I have at last received a letter from Mamma, a terrible letter, full of overpowering grief about Mircea's death, full of irrevocable, unreconcilable bitterness because we have gone to war. It seems I am accused of having wanted the war; in Germany I am made responsible, all their hatred and revenge turns towards me. Mamma actually never meant to write to me, never to be in communication with me as long as the war lasts; it was only the death of Mircea which made her break through her silence to send me a word of sympathy, then to return to her silence!

Can she really believe that I am responsible for this war? And she, a Russian, minding so terribly that we should have turned to the side of her former *patrie*! A curious state of things has come about through this terrible upheaval, such desperate conflicts.

Her hard words are an added burden on my already oppressed heart, but above all I weep when I think of the bitterness which fills her. It must be a worse suffering than all I have to bear, because I feel no bitterness towards anybody! But then at the end of the day as consolation came marvellously happy news: Ducky is coming to see me, dear sister Ducky; she may arrive any day!

George Michailovitch is also coming and he is my old friend, but I do not think that they are coming together.

So, amidst all this sadness and trouble, I am to have the joy of seeing Ducky; that is indeed a blessed event.

And Ducky actually came. The joy was almost unbearably great and each hour spent together was precious, but all too short. She had come to me at a moment when I was all but desperate, when misfortune was crushing in upon us from every side. I was struggling against too many difficulties at once, and was for the present insufficiently helped, but although often criticized and misjudged I was, all the same, becoming the pivot around which all energies centred. But as yet I did not feel or realize this; had I done so my task would have been less heavy. To me it seemed a blind and almost hopeless struggle.

My sister's quiet, staunch, somewhat masculine personality was just what I needed beside me. I could talk to

her freely, ask her advice, lay my problems before her, discuss the situation and how best to meet the inflow of disaster. Besides, our love and understanding for each other was so great that to be together was in itself a supreme comfort and consolation.

She arrived on the same morning as the King came for the opening of Parliament. He made a fine speech which was much applauded. He was right to come and open Parliament personally and he was given a warm reception in spite of the depressing situation. The news from the front, though, is very bad. The Russians hold no position, they are continually retreating, and Braila and Galatz are both threatened.

I had been making great efforts to bring about a coalition Government. I felt that this was most necessary, and Bratianu should share responsibilities with those of the Conservative party. It would be better for the King, better for Bratianu himself.

My diary is full of this struggle and how I was upheld by Prince Stirbey, who is continually going from one to another as peace-maker, trying to reconcile difficult temperaments and giving me timely hints where I could help with my feminine tact. But Bratianu was not over-pleased; he knew he was the strongest and did not care to share power. I have long descriptions of our interviews together, and of how I received one politician after another, doing all in my power to promote a good understanding, trying to persuade all sides that they must overcome party feeling and present a single front, united in common strength so as to meet the terrible situation bravely.

I nearly broke my heart in the effort and was often bitterly disappointed to meet with such selfishness even now in the hour of danger. Sometimes I had the feeling that my husband and I were the only really independent patriots; party feeling may be a stimulant, but certainly it is not always pretty!

Finally, a compromise was reached and a certain number of Conservatives entered the Cabinet, Také Ionescu, Michel Cantacuzène (Maruka's husband), Dr. Istrati and Demètre Grecianu. I had hoped for better results, but this was anyhow an improvement as it calmed public feeling.

Being at Jassy whilst my husband was at Barlad made me the centre of all inrushing currents and it was as much as I could do not to lose my footing, but I did my best to keep an open mind, not to become one-sided, but also not to provoke confusion by encouraging fundamental changes in time of danger; continuity of programme was essential.

I was learning a lot, but it meant hard labour from morning till night. I never granted myself an hour's rest; my brain had to be open for every question, my eye watchful and my heart ready to listen for all cries of distress.

I gave every ounce of my strength and reading through the tale of those days of stress, I wonder why I did not break down.

Into the bargain there were continual difficulties with the Russians; accustomed to their own limitless lands, they could not be brought to understand the enormous importance of holding our last precious positions.

I also discussed this with my sister and persuaded her to come with me to Head-quarters to have a talk with Zaharoff in her capacity of Russian Grand Duchess.

My mother's cousin, the Grand Duke George Michailovitch, had also come to Roumania and we were very glad to meet. He came continually to our house and liked to be with us, especially for meals.

Ducky was as untiring as I was, even more so, being a real Spartan. I have a complete description of our visit to Head-quarters to interview Zaharoff, but it is too long to be quoted in full. We also tried to get to Tutova to visit Constance Cantacuzène at her hospital, but the roads were in too frightful a condition, and we could not get there; it would have taken hours and our time was limited.

Nando also found it a comfort to talk to Ducky and he decided to come up to Jassy to see us.

Jassy, December 16th/29th, 1916.

Nando arrived from Zorleni for breakfast with George Michailovitch; it was nice to see him again, a friendly meeting in hard circumstances. Had a long talk. Ducky and he are most amusing because although very good friends, they are always quarrelling.

All sorts of questions had to be gone into ; the transportation question in particular is very difficult as we have only a single line between Jassy and Russia. The Russians would like to take our railways over into their hands. Certainly our railways are bad and there is a good deal of disorder, but very naturally the Roumanians are loath to give up anything which belongs to them, specially at a moment when so little remains to us. Burning questions, heavy with consequences one way or the other.

Did my best to smooth things out between both parties, as both sides of the question are confided to me.

Judging by all the information asked of me, all the propositions made to me, all the conversations I have had, it does not look, alas, as though the Russians thought they could defend our country for us !

This would mean exile, complete exile. The thought is so utterly ghastly that one accepts it quietly without words of complaint or protest, as one accepts the thought of death.

Different towns in Russia have even been spoken of where we could go and form a Roumanian colony, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, Poltava ; but although I faced the thought, my brain and heart cannot accept it. To be outcasts, wanderers, nothing belonging to us any more, how can such a thought be borne ? How would we live ? For what would we work ? Oh no, God forbid that it should come to this ! My God, my God, is the cup not yet full enough ?

Jassy, Saturday, December 17th/30th, 1916.

Busier than ever : everything one has to do seems to accumulate endlessly.

In the morning had no end of people to see and numerous questions to discuss with Ducky. We talked over all the different points of what she is to say to Emperor Nicky as she has promised to stop at the Stafka on her way back. She will try to explain to him all our difficulties and the danger our country is in.

Before lunch she, Ballif and I, drove down in the pouring rain to the station and potted about in unbelievable mud to look for railway carriages which could be turned into a Russian hospital train which Ducky hopes to arrange.

But difficulties spring up at every step. We try, however, to overcome them with our joint energy. Working together, she and I, we help each other and our resistance is steely, but it does not mean that it is not exhausting work.

George Michailovitch, who is always hungry, and who arrives much too early for each meal, came to lunch, after which we drove about with him to the Russian hospitals, where we helped him to distribute St. George crosses and medals amongst the dying and wounded. Witnessed touching scenes and saw terribly wounded men.

I also did my best to try and help the Russians to enlarge their hospital; they are in a part of the Notre Dame de Sion Convent, but they have not enough space. Ducky and I visited the old Mother Superior and found her in a state of exasperation because everybody was trying to take her house from her. She was not particularly amiable about the Russians, which was most embarrassing for me, and made Ducky very angry.

After this we still wandered about endlessly in the semi-darkness amongst the wounded in the enormous Russian evacuation hospital near the station. I always have quantities of cigarettes with me which I give with lavish hands wherever I pass. I gave to every soldier I met, even to those loitering about outside, and although they were somewhat sheepish, they were evidently very pleased. Home for late tea and endless, weighty conversations with Bratianu, who gets on very well with Ducky and was also very eager to impress upon her what she is to say to the Tsar.

Alongside, in the big room, innumerable ladies were working at the packets we are going to send to the soldiers for Christmas. It has become quite a habit for everyone to come here offering their aid, willing to be put to any use. Had hardly any time to dress for dinner. After dinner had still to write a weighty letter to Emperor Nicky, exerting my tired brain to the utmost and trying the while to crush down my sorrow at having to part from Ducky. She has been a great help, encouragement and stimulant to me. I hate to let her go!

At half-past eleven I took her to the station; the train was late. We parted with immense regret, but she has

promised, if God wills, to come back again directly after the Russian Christmas festivities. Completely exhausted, I finally got to bed at half-past twelve.

Soon after Ducky left, certain of my lady friends were possessed by the idea that I must go to Russia and plead with the Tsar, that this would force the Russian troops to stand their ground. The news that, in the middle of a well-organized and carefully planned attack which meant everything to us, the Russians had retreated at the crucial moment with disastrous result, was the event which inspired them with this idea.

Lala de Belloy was the first to open the attack. She talked and talked, tearing the soul from my body with her pleading, but worst of all was my friend Maruka, because occasionally Maruka goes off at a tangent, becoming absolutely fanatic.

She tortured me inexpressibly, accusing me even of want of patriotism because I would not then and there leave everything and rush off at their behest. In vain I tried to explain that I could not go off secretly. It was materially impossible as no train could be had without military permission, everything was under military control, and how could she imagine that I, the centre of everything, could suddenly disappear? How could it be done? Oh, she did not mind how it could be done! That was my business, where there was a will there was a way, and if I did not find that way it was a sign that I was too proud, afraid of being humiliated by the Tsar, etc. . . .

Maruka was, in fact, possessed with a romantic idea and saw me as a sort of second Königin Louisa on my knees in front of the Emperor of all the Russias, a heroine saving her country, and my refusal to act immediately upon their plan was on my side a proof that I was not the brave Queen they all imagined I was.

Considering the taut state of my nerves because of all the accumulated difficulties which were overwhelming me, this scene with Maruka nearly broke me down; it was excruciating torment and she finally left me in a huff, telling me that I had profoundly disappointed her, although

I promised I would go if I could obtain the King's consent.

There were also continual discussions about the evacuation question, which were also a torture. The King not being here everybody came to me, it was quicker, easier.

The thought of evacuation was what I minded most of all. Of all the tragic problems overwhelming me, this was the cruellest. It was the Russians in particular who were becoming very pressing, and Mossoloff was continually coming to me and bringing other Russians with him to present to me different solutions, all of them horrible to contemplate.

All the hospitals had to be visited, helped, encouraged. I was making continual rounds through them all, for my presence seemed necessary everywhere and I trained my two elder daughters, also Nicky, to help me as much as they could. Also my ladies, Simky and Irène, were continually at work, especially Simky, who was most efficient and energetic.

I had to be ready for every call, at all hours of the day. There was no time to consider if it was or was not my business; help was needed immediately, nothing could be put off. Danger was crushing in from all sides and it had to be met energetically, without hesitation.

One day I had a tragic visit to pay; I went to see my regiment, or, rather, the ragged remains of my regiment. We met at a place called Rivali just beyond Jassy and here I reviewed their thinned ranks and brought them my Christmas packets and they offered me a bouquet of mistletoe, having managed, I know not where from, to get a faded blue ribbon, the colour of the regiment, to tie it up with.

Colonel Prodan was commanding the regiment, and they were on their way to take up their winter quarters in some far-off Moldavian village. I had not seen my regiment since that day near the Danube when Mircea was dying.

It was also during this period that my daughters and I were invited to visit a marvellous Russian train, organized and run by Purichkevich (later celebrated in connexion with the Rasputin murder). It was a wonderful train brimful of every possible thing soldiers might need at the front, from felt shoes and mufflers to writing-paper or medicine.

There were also musical instruments and games for the convalescents with which to while away the time. I was offered, and gratefully accepted, a splendid stock of quinine, aspirin and all those necessary and useful drugs, becoming rarer and rarer in our regions. They gave me great bottles of them and I went home feeling rich and thankful.

Christmas was at hand, but the weather was not cold, which was a great blessing. We even sometimes had almost spring days.

Chapter XII

DISASTROUS DAYS

Jassy, December 25th, 1916/January 7th, 1917.

CHRISTMAS DAY! Usually it was a day of flowers; all my friends and acquaintances would send me flowers. My house became like a garden. Here neither for love nor money can any flowers be found. None! Not even the tiniest bouquet of violets. This lack of flowers is really a grief to me; it is the first time in my life that I am quite without flowers. Here the only thing that one has is mistletoe, and luckily there are quantities of that; the trees are sick and suffocated with mistletoe. At eleven, official service at the Metropolitan Church; before and after, work, work, we never stopped working as we wanted to finish our Christmas packets. This evening we sent three thousand off to the front, four hundred have already been given to my regiment, and a thousand are ready for the hospitals, but we go on and on without stopping, without a moment's rest.

At about half-past four Prince Stirbey came to tell Nando and me that there was very bad news, that all hope placed in a certain military combination had crumbled, because the Russians, in the middle of a successfully begun offensive, had given the order for retreat. Our despair was tragic! For a moment we were both completely crushed, with the feeling that all was in vain, that every effort was hopeless, that there was nothing left but to sit still and relinquish everything, everything . . . everything! However, after about an hour's despair we decided that it was cowardly to be crushed; that as long as there was an inch of Roumanian soil left to be saved we must save it, or anyhow try to save it at whatever cost!

And then suddenly we thought of what so many had

come to try and persuade me to do, to go myself to the Tsar and implore him to save the country! At this hour of complete bewilderment we at last agreed that it was step that might be taken, that perhaps *must* be taken. Of course the best thing would be if we could both go, but it is impossible for the King to go: he cannot leave now but I can, if I must.

So we sent for Bratianu and Také Ionescu to have it out with them.

It was a memorable interview. Bratianu opposed the idea, Také was for it. The King and I were simple and outspoken, he, touchingly turning to me to try and persuade them to let me do the thing which was so painful to both of us. What more could he do for his country, than offer to send his Queen to petition for his people as he himself cannot go!

Bratianu's objection was that this step would not be in keeping with the dignity of the Crown. I declared that a queen was never humiliated unless she *felt* humiliated. That if I did not at least offer to take this step I should always have the feeling that I had not done my utmost to save my country, although it was almost unbearably difficult to leave just now, having so much to do and so many depending upon me. Of course the mission might be hopeless and useless, yet I offered to go; what more could I do?

Také accepted the offer, Bratianu continued to be against it but ended by saying that as so many wanted me to do it, I should probably finally have to accept this mission. It was a most moving interview, and after it was over Nando and I felt quite weak, yet we knew that we had done what we *had* to do.

Stirbey stood by us bravely and was all the time a great consolation to us.

The first step was to send a telegram to Ducky to inquire if a visit to Petrograd would be acceptable at this moment.

The King left again for Head-quarters at half-past ten.

Jassy, December 26th, 1916/January 8th, 1917.

Snow and frost.

A lot to do, endless people to receive, difficult ques-

tions to be worked out, such as details of my visit to Russia, the journey, etc. Everything has to be carefully examined, combined, looked at from all sides. Luckily Prince Stirbey has remained here to help me, as my precious Ballif is not very well—he works too hard and worries too much. Everything to-day is fraught with such difficulties that it makes the stoutest heart quail, but I for one will not give up till the very end, till I or the country die; sometimes I think death would be an immense rest, but it is cowardly to think such a thing. I must keep Washburn's words before me: "There is gold in this country, but gold must crystallize round something: the King and you must be that thing around which the gold can crystallize." So let it be!

Have telegraphed to Ducky about coming to Russia, but I am not sure that this idea will meet with approval there, because there are rumours of serious trouble at the Russian court. It is said that the much-hated Rasputin has been murdered, killed by Dmitry Pavlovitch and the young Yusupoff, and that the Imperial Family is in revolt against the Empress, clamouring that she should be sent to a convent. She is extraordinarily hated and some event unknown to me must have brought this hatred to a climax. Anyhow, something uncanny and dreadful is going on there, so I hardly think it would be a propitious moment for me to arrive. I interviewed Mossoloff and told him about my plan of going to the Tsar; I saw that it rather terrified him, but he was nice and understanding, admitting that the way of touching the Tsar was "*de l'ébranler sentimentalement*," but one must remember, he warned me, that the Empress had a quite disastrous way of throwing cold water upon all his enthusiasms. How deplorable when a woman has a bad influence over a man! Poor Alix!

I also reviewed with him the evacuation question which is immensely difficult; it is the railway transportation that renders the whole situation so very anxious. Oh dear, how very difficult it all is!

Jassy, December 28th, 1916/January 10th, 1917.

All the morning went about in different hospitals, Russian, Roumanian, French. Terrible need everywhere. Because of

difficult transport conditions, wood is becoming rare, and everywhere I am asked to help, asked to make the impossible possible. I strain every nerve, rack my imagination, use whatever influence I have and all the same there is so very little that I can do.

The weight of all this depresses me, no good news is ever brought to me, hope grows less and less; the disorder, discouragement, disorganization of everything seems complete. I suppose it is because of the beaten, invaded condition of our country, but it is difficult to wade through. Even Minister Alecco Constantinescu, generally so resourceful, was discouraging this evening when he came to talk with me.

At seven Mossoloff came again. He is in a great state of despair about the news received from Petersburg. It is now confirmed that Rasputin has been killed, that Dmitry has had a hand in it, and that he has been banished. Trepoff has been forced to resign, and an outsider has become Prime Minister; the Empress seems to have won all along the line, which is a source of despair to everyone, because her influence upon her husband is considered fatal and unlucky. Poor old Mossoloff had also bad news about his son, which added to his sadness.

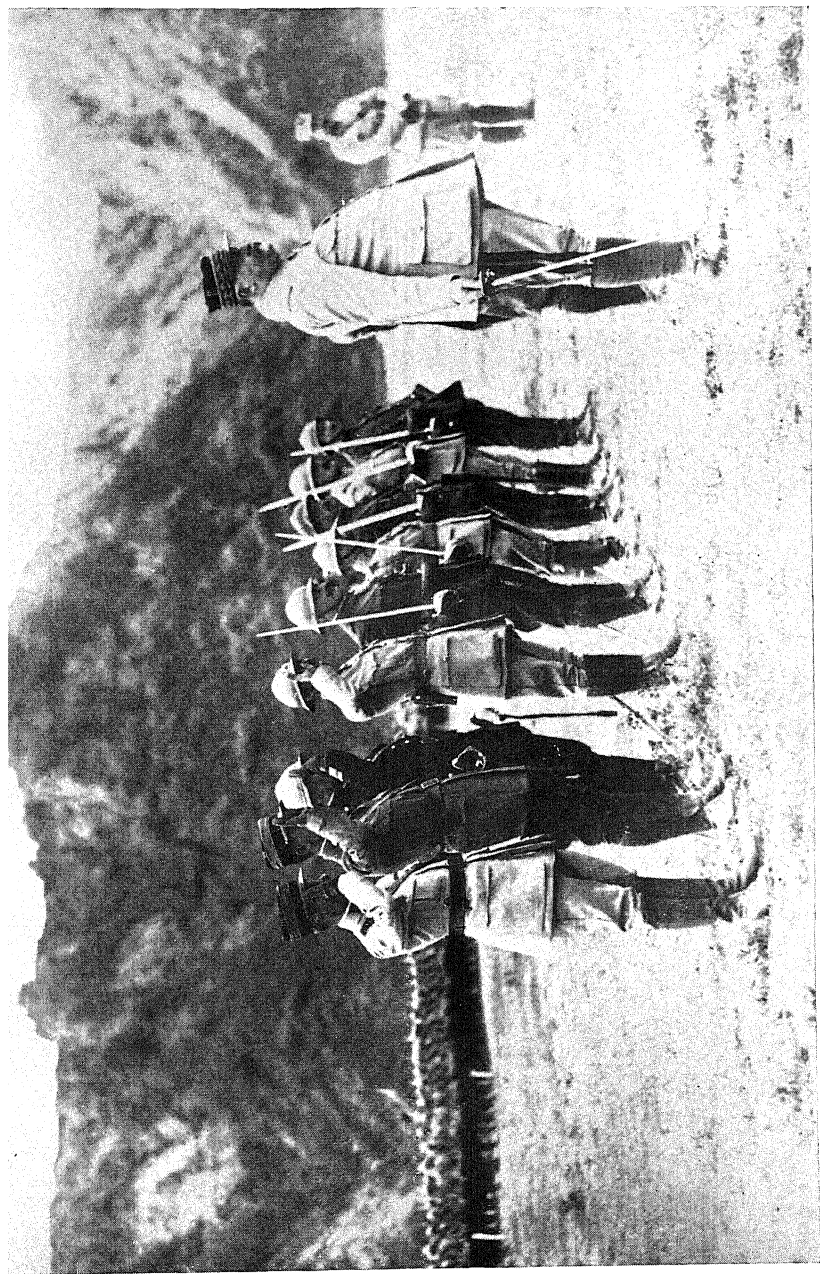
The place spoken of for our eventual exile in Russia is Kherson, a little town not far from the Black Sea, beyond Odessa. If there is to be exile I do not object to this choice; it would not be so dreadfully far off, and anything would be better than the North!

Jassy, December 30th, 1916/January 12th, 1917.

Nando and Carol arrived from Zorleni for breakfast. A great deal of talk and discussion which tired me as I am not feeling particularly well.

The answer from Ducky has come. She considers that it is not a wise moment for me to come to Russia. The family situation there is too strained after the terrible storms raised by Rasputin's death.

On the whole I am relieved, although I should like to have done this for my country, as it seemed to expect it of me. Now Carol and Bratianu are going instead, which will make certain people very angry. But I cannot stem



GENERAL BERTHELOT.

the tide, I have done my best, and sometimes when solutions are taken out of one's hands, then one must simply sit still and become an onlooker without wasting one's energy upon things that anyhow one cannot change.

Went with Elisabetta to Mignon's hospital (for several weeks Mignon has been working in a large hospital, aided by French doctors) to distribute my Christmas bags. This is the first hospital which is to be evacuated into Russia, the beginning of an adventure of which one cannot foresee the end. Curiously hard times when each step one takes is full of strange terrors, of unexplored griefs and hardships.

Tried to take some rest, as I am really not feeling quite well; but bed is no refuge when people come and sit beside it discussing military questions in loud voices which seem to grate upon one's nerves.

Jassy, December 31st, 1916/January 13th, 1917.

The last day of the year and one which will for ever be remembered by us all because of a fearful railway accident which seemed to put the finishing touch to that disastrous year. At one o'clock in the night the train between here and Bârnova came to grief, the brakes giving way when it was travelling downhill. The train was overcrowded as usual, the carriages went off the rails and capsized, and hundreds were killed and wounded; besides, there was some terrible explosion and many people were burned to death.

Spent my whole afternoon with my daughters and Nicky going from hospital to hospital visiting the wounded, where we saw sights of unforgettable horror.

I am always astonished that Nicky asks to go with me. He has no horror of hospitals and always volunteers to come with me and help. This is a curious trait in his otherwise excessively ardent, fidgety, over-excitabile nature.

The day was also remarkable for political intrigues, a great effervescence amongst the members of the Government. Deputies from both sides come to me. Some people hope that I shall be as partial as they are. All this has been fermented because Carol and Bratianu are going to Russia instead of me. Where they make a mistake is in supposing that I make a personal question out of things; for me it

is the country which counts and my own ambitions mean nothing to me. I dearly hope that Carol and Bratianu will do good work. I have no wish to be mixed up in politics, for I have plenty to do with my hospitals and all the miserable, suffering people who look to me for help.

After dinner Professor Jorga came with a chorus and various actors and actresses from the theatre for what the Roumanians call "Vicleim," an old Roumanian custom for New Year, when singers go about from house to house with a plough, chanting and making a lot of noise. This is generally done by poor children, who are then given small gifts, nuts and apples and something to drink. Jorga had composed a poem in popular form, which Notara (our oldest actor) recited.

At eleven the King left again for Head-quarters; he hates being here in the middle of a thousand intrigues, little realizing what my life has been for nearly two months.

Jassy, Tuesday, January 3rd/16th, 1917.

I was supposed to go to some hospitals, but there was some confusion and I couldn't get off. The atmosphere in my house is rather heavy at this moment, and there are certain intrigues going on which I shall have to stop. I am the kindest of souls and in some things I am even idiotically indulgent, but what is mine is mine. I wish to be mistress in my own house. If I am frustrated in this, then all the blood of ancient ancestors comes out in me. I have *toutes les bontés*, but I will not be made a fool of in my own house. If I feel underhand intrigues going on, then I would rather sweep everybody out, even those of whom I am most fond. Each creature has its limitations and these are mine; I cannot and will not bear the feeling that under my very roof I cannot obtain what I want, because my wishes are being undermined by others; there cannot be two masters.

I need loyalty and truth; the moment I feel the least unfair play I become enraged and all my peace is at an end. I can stick to people through thick and thin no matter what others tell me about them, till I, myself, am possessed by a shadow of doubt. If this comes over me it is finished, I am sickened and would rather smash things into a thousand

pieces than go on. I feel something of this kind to-day and I must put a stop to it or I shall burst.

So as to cool my head I went out for a walk with Elisabetta. The weather was too beautiful, a glorious sun streaming down, but the roads are impossibly muddy.

For the same reason, in the afternoon I took a long, rambling voyage of discovery with Nicky in his "Bambino." We decided to find the end of Jassy, and found that it ended in mud, and a fat pig sitting in the middle of this mud barring the so-called road. We laughed! Sometimes I simply must laugh, so that my heart does not burst and my mind give way to sorrow. These ridiculous little drives in the "Bambino" relieve me both morally and physically; I become in a sense a child again, who rejoices in the precious little machine driven by a child.

I cannot quite explain this side of my character, except that in reality I was made for a simple, happy life and yet, though inclined by nature to be independent and adventurous, I find myself stuffed into a position of never-ending complications and small intrigues.

At least in war-time if we cannot have anything else, let us have truth! I feel this so strongly. If people would only not intrigue and eat each other up with jealousy and always be offended! All this sounds very confused, but I am just letting my thoughts run away with me, because my head, my heart and my soul are too full.

Towards evening my depression came over me again, and even assumed greater proportions, and as I sat rather apart in the big room, working with many others, I suddenly found myself weeping great tears of grief. At times my great longing for Mircea awakes like an immense wave of pain and all my other sorrows and griefs group themselves around this central pain till I feel I must lie down and die.

I was beginning to feel that I must have a rest or I would break down. I always had an instinctive feeling of self-preservation, a sort of sub-conscious knowledge when my strength was running out. These last two months had been too strenuous; I needed a change if only for a few days. But where find rest? Where could I go?

Then I thought of quiet Zorleni, where Nando was living near Head-quarters which were at Barlad.

It sounds odd perhaps that peace and quiet could be found at Head-quarters, but so it was. No doubt they had military work to do, but only at certain hours, not like here at Jassy where my room had become the centre of every energy, of every despair, where I could never call an hour my own from nine in the morning till eleven at night. Besides all the political effervescence and the distressing evacuation questions, there were also all the hospitals and constant distress because we lacked all the most essential things needed, which were not to be found anywhere, and all the demands were brought to me, and it was only by constantly visiting each place myself and seeing to everything in person that I could keep things going. Also all the foreigners came to me and I was expected to find immediate solutions for the most complicated cases. I could only get through with everything by instantly attending to each demand, by never putting anything off for even half an hour. But it was exhausting.

So to Zorleni I went, taking with me only Ballif, who, during the time I was there, could collect all the necessary military information. I also took my favourite horse, Grui Sânger, hoping to be able to ride, the weather having been quite mild. I had never had any time to ride at Jassy. Unfortunately the next day after my arrival, winter came with sudden vengeance and I was not once able to take out my horse.

But my week at Zorleni was really a rest. Nando occasionally had people to lunch, but otherwise the life was most peaceful, uniform and unclouded, almost unbelievably so. The military news was bad, but thank God I could not be expected to make military plans! And except for visiting the hospitals at Barlad, I had little to do, and had plenty of time to read, write and think.

Occasionally I would walk through the desolate-looking village, and one day I came upon a half-frozen flock of sheep and took it upon myself to go from hut to hut begging the peasants to take in one or two sheep, thus saving them from certain death, promising the shepherd that I would

make good his losses. I could not bear to think of the animals freezing to death without any shelter.

Another time I visited a large military train-depot and was given by the general in command a hundred warm dressing-gowns for my unfortunate hospitals. But the culminating moment of my stay was when Colonel Muruzi, of my regiment, came and asked me to accept as a gift his beautiful white thoroughbred horse, Ardeal, an animal I had always longed to possess. Muruzi declared it was too precious a horse to expose to the inclemencies of a winter campaign. I was delighted to become the possessor of this magnificent creature and rejoiced greatly.

In the late afternoon, Prince Stirbey, who was living with the A.D.C.s in a house on the same grounds, would come to read to me whilst I worked.

Carol and Bratianu were in Petersburg, and both Stirbey and I would help the King decipher the endless political and confidential telegrams received from there. The project of Carol's marriage with the eldest daughter of the Tsar had suddenly been revived in court circles, which somehow seemed an impossibly peaceful plan for such desperate and unhappy times.

This week spent at quiet, ugly Zorleni was almost incredibly restful, but Jassy and all my work there was clamouring for me, so I dared not prolong this peaceful interlude, and returned again to my duties. It had become bitterly cold and I fully realized that this inclement temperature would add a terrible new complication to our many misfortunes.

But a great joy was also to come to me, for I received news that Ducky was soon coming back to Jassy for a second visit.

Jassy, January 14th/17th, 1917.

Arrived at half-past eight after having travelled the night from Zorleni.

As anticipated, hardly had I set foot in my house before all my worries began again.

No wood in the hospitals, not enough to eat, the ladies and doctors inclined to be quarrelsome. There is danger

of various epidemics, as there is not enough method in the sorting of the wounded, infectious cases being boxed up together with the wounded. Because of the want of wood for heating the patients catch cold and die of pneumonia, neither can their linen be washed, nor their food cooked, all for the want of fuel. It is an infinite and complicated source of despair.

The want of a responsible Head for our sanitary questions makes itself felt. But owing to the stupendous difficulties of the situation it is hard to find a man equal to the occasion. I know that something ought to be done, could and should be done, but must humbly confess that I do not for the moment see my way out of the difficulty.

The hospital trains are also most unsatisfactory, and everywhere the lack of supervision makes itself felt. Our people need looking after and have to be continually kept at their job.

I know that this sudden retreat, followed by a victorious enemy tearing from us three-quarters of the richest part of the country, has made everything incredibly complicated and confused. That we are fighting against almost insurmountable odds, this too I know, but all the same I definitely feel that if everybody would bravely pull together and face our disaster squarely some of the terrible chaos could be overcome.

My whole morning was taken up by endless and wearisome discussions in all directions.

Found Ileana in bed, having been inoculated against the threatened contagious illnesses that must certainly soon spread. She was feeling very ill and had a high temperature and I remained with her as long as I could.

Old Prince Oldenburg, chief inspector of the Russian Red Cross, came for lunch. He is very old, but I believe he is a mighty terror to all those working under him whom he rules with a rod of iron. He is very energetic and extraordinarily ugly.

After lunch we visited the young Empress's hospital train, a beautiful train, admirably organized and well kept. A most amiable, thin, eagle-faced general, who was at the head of it, and his fat little wife received us with great joy

and I was given a wonderful stock of linen for about two hundred wounded. The Russians may have many faults, but they are certainly very generous.

All the evening restless coming and going of people with eternal and varied complaints till I could bear it no longer, and suddenly made up my mind to call up a few ministers and also General Prezan, so as to make a plan for better co-operation.

I gathered together Také Ionescu, Vintila Bratianu, Demètre Grecianu and Alecco Constantinescu.

I cannot flatter myself that I came to any particularly satisfactory conclusions, in spite of trying to be very clear and persuasive. I explained that having spent eight days at Head-quarters, I had found there perfect goodwill and had arranged that orders should be given for the transportation of wood for the hospitals. I had been assured that orders had been carried out, but on arriving at Jassy I discovered that nothing had been done and that our unfortunate wounded were dying like flies, not of their wounds, but of pneumonia caught because of the cold in the unheated hospitals. As there was no wood with which to heat the stoves, their linen could not be washed, so they were either lying half naked in their beds or in shirts so filthy that it was impossible to save them from infection.

As I talked, the monstrous vision of our wretched situation rose before me. There are days when there is not even bread because the mills cannot work for want of fuel. And yet all around Jassy masses of wood had been cut and it is only the difficulty of transportation which is making everything so hopeless.

The ministers declared that as long as Head-quarters were at Barlad and communications were so bad things were sure to go wrong as it made unity of action complicated. I listened to them patiently but stuck to my opinion that it would be a terrible added difficulty to try and find quarters for the whole Roumanian, as well as the Russian, General Staff in our already overcrowded town. I know something of the difficulties of finding houses because of our over-crowded hospitals, where sometimes three men have to be stuck in one bed. Of course these important

gentlemen do not see anything of this sort, but it falls to my share, so I know, and I have no illusions.

What makes my work so difficult and often makes me feel so helpless is that I have no actual power in my hands, only the right to try and help, to give ideas, to persuade, to try and unify action; but an actual recognized *right* to order about, I have not. For really effective work I ought to have a few energetic men at my side and a free hand to do what must be done and permission to shoulder my own responsibilities. I am afraid that others do not yet see this as clearly as I do; but by sheer necessity they will have to come to another order of things. A chief will have to be found somewhere, an energetic organizer, who will be able to lift the country out of its present chaos. All I was able to obtain to-day was a promise that Army and Government would work hand in hand, and I heard afterwards that the same day they actually did have a several hours' conference about the questions I had touched upon.

Nando came in whilst I was talking to the authorities and loyally upheld my point of view. At half-past ten p.m. we had to be off to the station, as we are leaving for the front.

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Chapter XIII

DISEASE, DISORDER AND INTRIGUE

On the Front, January 16th/29th, 1917.

YESTERDAY was a day of endless hospitals. To-day was a day amongst the troops. In the morning Nando decorated three flags at Onesti and several officers and many soldiers. Touching ceremony in a setting of snow. Snow everywhere, everything dead white, sky and earth, so that one's eyes could hardly bear the dull glare.

In the afternoon we set off again in another direction, our motors labouring with difficulty through high masses of snow; several stoppages and then arrival at a village near which a number of troops were being re-grouped after having come from the trenches. We passed them in a sort of review and there was much loyal cheering and many faces delighted to see us, but oh what ragged, gaunt-looking men with brown, sometimes almost black, faces and keen, far-seeing eyes, eyes that had seen every horror and sudden death! Besides, they looked terribly frozen, being quite insufficiently clothed for the very severe temperature.

Here Nando also gave many decorations, the ceremony lasting much longer than in the morning as there were great numbers of troops. We were standing about in the fields, a keen north wind was blowing and I got colder and colder. On all sides snow, snow, nothing but snow: sky and earth white, no beginning and no end either to sky or earth; white despair.

It filled me with inexpressible emotion when I looked at all those brave men who, against overwhelming odds, ill-fed and in every way insufficiently equipped, are keeping an overpowering enemy at bay. I know that everything is very difficult now with such fearful odds against us, but it

did shock me and wring my heart to see them so miserably clothed. And as to the horses—I shall not even begin to describe what they were like.

One queer little event took place, as I was standing in the heavy snow amongst withered corn-stalks. A wee little mouse jumped up on to my arm and I stuffed it into my muff and carried it about all the time with me to keep it warm.

We drove back to our train in a raging snowstorm which made everything hazy and dream-like. When I am very cold I have the sensation of becoming smaller, of losing part of my identity; I shrink!

At Bacau, Madame Averescu came to see me, whilst Nando had still a few military schools to inspect, although it was already dark.

Averescu makes a decidedly masterful impression: it is evident that he knows what he wants and that people follow him willingly, for he has the real leader's spirit. All the measures he takes are intelligent and to the point.

We arrived at Roman for dinner and dined in the train with a Russian general, aide of General Lecinsky, who was ill in bed with bronchitis. This general, whose name I cannot remember, was tall and thin and talked quite decent French.

Jassy, Tuesday, 17th/30th January, 1917.

We travelled during the night and arrived here for breakfast. Slept beautifully: I like sleeping in the train and after yesterday's strong, cold air I was particularly sleepy.

Found everybody well at home.

They are preparing a house for the King when Headquarters move to Jassy as my house is not big enough for all of us together; besides, His Majesty must have plenty of space for all the men around him. I went over to see it being put in order, quite a nice house, big and light, a house in which Cuza had lived in days gone by. A most miscellaneous conglomeration of furniture, some beautiful old chairs and cupboards from Sinaia, no curtains to the windows, no carpets, really a funny mixture, but Nando is

very indifferent as to how he lives and is in every way extremely frugal.

I also went to inspect a depot of medicines generously given me by the Russians, then to see a French doctor who makes miraculous cures for burns with a sort of wax which he calls Ambrine. One man whose face had been entirely burned has completely recovered, the colour of his face is quite normal and no traces of burning or scars mark his skin, nor has he any pain ; it certainly is a miraculous cure. The same cure can be used for chilblains. The doctor told me that frozen feet could be prevented by dipping them into common paraffin, but alas, it would probably be impossible to have sufficient paraffin on the front.

In the afternoon went sleighing with Nicky. Beautiful weather, enormous quantities of snow, the heaviest fall for many years.

Towards evening I had to see a Russian gentleman come from Petrograd to help about the evacuation business to Kherson. Somehow I cannot believe that it will really come to this, yet it is better to have everything in order so as not to have confusion and disaster at the last moment if the worst comes to the worst. He was a very pleasant young man, very tall and talkative, uncomfortably outspoken about Russian affairs. I was absolutely horrified at all he told me. Their hatred of the Empress has reached a terrible pitch ; they consider her a misfortune for the country and there is no one to-day who would not gladly get rid of her by any means.

How dreadful ! I cannot imagine anything more ghastly than to be hated by one's own people, and after all it is not so very difficult to make yourself beloved if you are Queen, in Russia especially where the Tsar and Tsarina are almost sacred figures.

Later I had still to see Mossoloff, and we talked about all sorts of things. I quite liked the old gentleman. He, too, is very outspoken. Then I received the little doctor from the Purichkevich train so that I could thank him for all the things that they had given me. He was beaming and had so mightily perfumed himself for the occasion that he made my whole room smell of his scent, which luckily

was a good scent. I offered him my photograph, and he gave me a very welcome box of excellent chocolates from Odessa, a real luxury nowadays. Altogether he seemed to be quite delighted, pleased with himself, his scent, and also it seems with me!

Jassy, Wednesday, January 18th/31st, 1917.

Ducky has arrived! Great joy! Everybody is pleased that she has come back, she is much liked, as all recognize her undeniable personality, her strength of character, and superior intelligence; besides, she is both agreeable and amusing and has a wonderful way of relating things, tersely, in a few words.

To me it means more than I can say to have her here again, it makes everything easier; it is really a case of *geteiltes Leid, halbes Leid*, whilst, alas, there can be no question of *geteilte Freude* just now. But all the same even small things become pleasant when one has one of one's own kith and kin with whom to share them; someone who feels alike, thinks alike, was brought up in the same way.

Glorious excitement unpacking all the delightful things she has brought us. Good things to eat and also useful things, sweets, tea, home-made cherry brandy, smoked fish, etc., big Russian water-tight boots, leather jackets, Orenburg shawls, a paint-box for Ileana, etc., etc. Nicky was given a pair of tyres for his precious "Bambino" and he also ran off with a fur-lined leather jacket. Ileana got a much-desired horse and cart and other small surprises. It was like having Christmas over again.

And after that another joy! Splendid provisions for my soldiers and for my hospitals, thousands and thousands of things: shirts and trousers, gloves and sheets, dressing-gowns and bandages, medicines, needles and cotton, a generous and splendid donation, which means more than gold to us. This is an untold blessing, as each day our situation becomes more precarious and more difficult, and so few pleasant things happen to us just now. May my beloved Ducky be a thousand times blessed!

Endless and interesting conversations with Ducky about the situation in Russia, which is very dangerous because of

the prevailing great hatred for the Empress, so that even the Emperor is looked on askance and there is actually talk about suppressing them one way or another. The Imperial couple keep sending people into banishment; no one is safe any more, and they make foolish and unjustified nominations. Their Government is composed of absolutely unknown and worthless people.

Here everything is getting more and more difficult. The great cold which has prevailed for some time makes the question of fuel a real despair, also food is getting scarce, and both the Roumanian and the Russian railways are running very badly. The situation is really most serious, especially as we are threatened with an epidemic of that dreadful black typhus, unless measures are taken in time, but it is impossible to take any measures as long as there is no real head to our sanitary organization. I am trying to have Jean Cantacuzène appointed with Slatineanu; it was nearly done but somewhere it had met with opposition, and I did not succeed. This threw me into a state of despair, because it is absolutely essential that I should carry this through; but I shall have mountains to move before I can do so! How hard it all is, and how I hate politics!

After lunch Ducky and I set out with Ballif in an open motor to see where they are cutting the wood round about Jassy. A beautiful afternoon, but deadly, cruelly cold, almost impossible to clothe oneself so as not to freeze, and I have no closed car. We saw where the wood was being cut, and how it was being brought into town; we also saw how Austrian prisoners were carrying it on their backs to the carts and motors that were to bring it into Jassy, but where does it go? We got very cold, and Ducky, although warmly dressed, nearly perished. She always hated the cold. Her circulation is not as good as mine.

Jassy, 22nd January/4th February, 1917.

Nando arrived for breakfast.

Spent an agitated morning seeing numerous people and hearing nothing but things which made my heart and soul ache. As I am not feeling particularly well physically I am inclined to take things doubly tragically, and great waves of

grief pass over me so that any moment I feel as though I must burst into tears.

Suddenly Lady Barclay appeared, very breezy and very satisfied with the good work she is doing. She is a capable but agitated lady.

Good old Georgie has also reappeared; of course he came to lunch. He was full of talk and Ducky and he were as amusing as ever together, although what they had to talk about was not exactly cheerful.

After lunch Ducky and I set out to visit a hospital installed in the former convent Frumoasa, built on the outskirts of the town, in which all the soldiers with eye complaints have been interned. Doctor Cantacuzène had specially asked me to go and inspect this hospital because it is in a terrible condition; they always hope that when I go somewhere I shall be able to insist upon improvements, and also help as much as I can with my own means.

I have been hardened to many sights since I have been going about from one wretched hospital to another, but I confess that this is one of the most awful things I have ever seen.

Although our excellent Doctor Staicovitch is at the head of it, aided by a nice young doctor whom I do not know, but who talked several languages fluently, even English, the place is horrible and the two doctors were in indignant despair about the state of things, though nobody really knows who can be held responsible for it. In a space meant only for three hundred, seven hundred have been herded together in barn-like constructions, without ventilation or light, with muddy floors which are nothing but stamped earth, the beds fixed one above the other. And stuffed into these, a crowd of unfortunate beings with every imaginable eye complaint, not to speak of several forms of typhus. No place for isolating infectious diseases, and no sanitary arrangements of any kind. A terrible state of affairs which will have to be looked into, but which, alas, cannot be bettered in a day.

Ducky and I wandered through these ghastly wards with the feeling that we were advancing into Hell, wondering how much misery human beings can bear without succumbing.

The beds stand one against the other with no space between them, which makes the doctors' work well-nigh impossible.

The first step I must take is to insist upon Jean Cantacuzène's nomination in the face of every opposition; we must have a responsible head. I decided in my heart that before night came on this question should be settled. This inspection over, although neither of us was feeling well, Ducky and I dragged about wearily on foot for several kilometres through deep snow at a far-off station where we were searching for some railway carriages she wanted to turn into a hospital train. What we found was very unsatisfactory, but we got excruciatingly tired wading through the snow-drifts with our big Russian boots.

When we reached home we found old Georgie waiting for us and crying for his tea. He remained with us till nearly dinner-time, upon which he left us to reappear well before the soup was served, because dear Georgie has a healthy Russian appetite.

Having an excellent cook in his train and plentiful provisions, good old Georgie brings us each day some excellent *zacuska*, which is the children's delight.

This, however, did not exclude my still having to receive Princess Marie Maruzi, who came to tell me about all the horrors I had just seen.

Ducky remained with us eleven days. She helped me in every way. Things were working up to a crisis; I was not at all well at that time, but overworked and harassed as I was, I made heroic efforts not to break down.

My diary at this period is full of the struggle I had to have Dr. Jean Cantacuzène named as supreme head of our sanitary organization, which was in a chaotic condition, and black typhus was spreading appallingly. Political intrigues were rampant, and although I had at one moment really considered his nomination a settled thing, it suddenly fell through and I had to begin the struggle all over again.

This brought me almost to the verge of despair. Why should politics and personal animosity mix up in everything?

I, however, *had* to stand above party feeling, voting for what I considered right, even if I made myself unpopular with some, perhaps even with my friends. I had to fight tooth and nail to preserve my independence and not to be influenced one way or another. I had also a cruel struggle about my "Regina Maria" ambulances, a well-run organization, under my special guidance and of which Jean Chrissoveloni was the leading spirit. We did astonishingly good work, being always there when the need was greatest.

My name was a sort of password for all who belonged to our unit, holding everyone together. It was an inspiration for the simplest chauffeur or mechanic, as it was for all those in higher command. "Regina Maria" was their pride and strength.

Now the army wanted to take my motors from me to combine them with the military units, and I knew that this would be fatal; in a short time nothing would remain of our brave work and all enthusiasm would die a sudden death.

Therefore in the face of sickening opposition, in spite of unbearably overwrought nerves, I strained my last strength to the utmost not to be beaten in this. Finally I won, but I nearly succumbed in the effort.

Ducky stood staunchly by me. Her language was forceful and to the point, and she defended her hard-trying sister with splendid energy.

We always had guests for lunch and amongst them we received two celebrated Russian generals, Keller and Wrangel. Keller was a brilliant cavalry officer *de grande allure*, Wrangel, tall and incredibly slim, finally played, as will be remembered, a great part in the struggle of the "White Army."

I give a few extracts from my journal during those days of high pressure:

Jassy, Monday, January 23rd/February 5th, 1917.

Woke up rather feverish and not feeling very well and still idiotically inclined to weep.

Everything seems too hard, too difficult, too completely dreadful, as though no human strength could stand such pressure and not give way to despair. But I *shall* stand

it, I have sworn to stand it to the bitter end, it may even be a glorious end; at the deepest depths of my soul, I still believe it will be a glorious end, though I must admit that nothing at the present time justifies this optimism.

Germany has declared war *à outrance* with her submarines, which means that they will blow up without warning every boat that sails the seas within certain zones, everything, including neutral boats! No warning will be given and no account will be taken of life. It is a monstrous threat, but it certainly looks as though they are capable of carrying it out. In consequence both America and Spain have called back their Ambassadors and stand on the verge of war. What is our poor old world coming to?

Decided to remain quiet to-day, to undertake nothing so as to give my poor aching body a chance.

I did, however, have Norton-Griffiths for lunch. We have all become very fond of him; he has a quiet, masterful way about him which inspires confidence, and the King also has the highest opinion of him. I want him to try and help me to get out a certain number of railway carriages that have been blocked; these carriages contain collapsible barracks which Jean Cantacuzène needs for beginning his serious work of *dépouillage*. The carriages are blocked somewhere at a little station called Rafaila and there are twenty-two trains standing before them. This is the sort of thing I am asked to do.

Jassy, Thursday, January 26th/February 8th, 1917.

A rather melancholy day, everybody's nerves on edge, as no one is feeling well.

At breakfast an unfortunate discussion was started about my "Regina Maria" ambulances with which we fetch the wounded from the front. As during the retreat a great many motor ambulances were lost, the army is trying to lay its hands upon my organization as it is still complete. When I mentioned this to Ballif his answers were not particularly tactful. I am convinced he did not really mean to hurt me, but being already upset he managed to cut me to the quick. At first I tried to remain calm, but as the discussion became more heated my exasperation got the better

of me. There has been too much disappointment and vexation lately, so that as I talked an uncontrollable grief welled up and overflowed, and at first I am sorry to say I became frightfully angry and said many of those unjustifiable things which escape from one at moments of tremendous bitterness. All this had been accumulating for a long time and my state of health was finally undermining the self-control I had preserved all along.

Now it was a sort of relish to give vent in words to all my pent-up despair. I declared that my goodwill was misunderstood, my motives suspected, that everybody came to me crying for help, and yet the moment I did want to help, tried to help, endless intrigues undermined my every effort. I had neither pride nor personal ambition, only a heart that in spite of all my grief was still glowing with love, a heart which only asked humbly to be allowed to help and work, but even this right was not conceded to me. I had agreed to give up my own hospital so as to be able to help all other hospitals in need, distributing all those many things I had carefully gathered together. This was no doubt a useful way of giving aid, but it left my heart empty; and now, if they also want to take my ambulances away from me, which are well organized and run with an enthusiasm not to be found again if they become anonymous, all those working in them, having been fired by my sympathy, would then disintegrate. If they did this to me, then better once and for all to bury me in a deep well and put a big stone over it; the only thing I begged was that the stone should be heavy enough to prevent my hearing what was being done over my head as I was sick of political intrigues.

I had no idea that so much bitterness had accumulated in my soul: I can only say that quinine would have been sweet in comparison. But the humiliating part of it was that it all ended by my having to get up from the table in floods of tears.

I fled to my bed where Ileana came and lay down beside me to try and console me; she is a lovable, adorable child with an extraordinarily affectionate heart for her age. We talked of Mircea, mingling our tears, whilst I wept and wept in abject misery.

Not long after, my faithful Ballif, full of remorse, came to tell me that he had been to General Prezan to talk over the ambulance business, which for the moment is to remain untouched. I was still lying on my bed and had nothing more to say. It was as though I were emptied of speech, but Ducky who was sitting beside me told him that she thought people were behaving towards me in an unjustifiable way. The burden of everything lay upon my shoulders, everybody expected everything of me and at the same time hampered me in every way, and this she considered incomprehensibly illogical as well as unfair.

I kept my tear-stained face hidden in my pillows and took no part in the conversation. They talked over my head as though I were a sick child, which I certainly must have resembled at that moment; there was nothing of the energetic, winning Queen about me just then.

All my children were inoculated to-day, some for the second, some for the third time, and were feeling terribly ill with raging fever. After dinner Ileana was seized with a bad pain in the lower part of her stomach, which gave us a great fright. We sent for Dr. Romalo, but he told us not to be anxious, explaining that these injections often gave strange and uncomfortable results.

Ducky and I, neither of us feeling very well, went for once early to bed.

Jassy, Friday, January 27th/February 9th, 1917.

Had a bad night, my cold has gone down to the bronchial tubes and I draw my breath with a whizzing sound most disturbing when in bed, as it makes me cough.

Morally and physically I am badly run down, but I must not give way, there is too much to be done, I must continue my work in spite of the wrath I feel against those who make things so difficult.

The suggestion has again been launched that perhaps I should go to Russia. At first we planned that I might go off with Ducky, but this is rather difficult to arrange, as being Queen I would have to be received with royal honours, etc.

The idea of Carol's marriage with Olga, the eldest daughter

of the Tsar, has also suddenly cropped up again ; advances are being made from Petersburg. There has been wind of it here and people, eager for something pleasant at last, are overjoyed by this thought. I must say it never entered my head that such an idea would come to them now when our little country hardly exists. But because of its humiliated state it would be looked upon as a happy event. It remains to be seen if the young people could take any liking to each other.

Anyhow, this has put the idea of my going to Russia on the map again.

Good old Georgie reappeared for lunch and dinner and tea, but Ducky and I were still feeling unwell and we were not such good companions as usual.

The weather continues bitterly cold, the railways run worse and worse, the fear of famine is becoming more and more a reality ; and yet one must have the courage not to give way.

Jassy, January 30th/February 12th, 1917.

Had an awful night, felt abominably ill ; at about three a.m. I broke into a violent sweat and my temperature, which had been very high, at last went down.

This morning, although I feel as weak as a new-born babe, my head is much clearer. Throat still horribly painful but breathing easier.

Ducky who was to have left, is staying till she is sure that I am really better ; she is awfully kind and looks after me like a mother.

This morning Nando came to me with a pale face and brought me terrible news : Colonel Alexander Sturdza (son of old Demètre Sturdza, head of the Liberal Party during Uncle's reign), who for several days had mysteriously disappeared, is thought to have been a traitor of the blackest kind. Crăinicianu, son of the general, was taken with manifestos in his pocket, signed Sturdza, in which he calls upon the army to surrender to the enemy and to join hands with the Roumanian prisoners on the other side and to throw the Russians out of the country !

Nando almost broke down over this, and no wonder !

And yet somehow I cannot imagine that Sturdza would stain his father's name by such a deed!

Jassy, February 8th/21st, 1917.

I am still not well. Had a dreadful shock to-day, as it seems poor General S—— was publicly degraded. S——! Successful, smiling, fat, comfortable S—— had to stand up to public disgrace with all Jassy looking on whilst they tore off his "galons" and dressed him in convict's clothes. He is condemned to five years' hard labour.

I had heard that this was to happen, but I did not know that it was to be to-day. I was in bed and Simky was sitting beside me when I heard the dull, continuous thud of soldiers tramping past my window; I asked Simky why so many soldiers were passing by and she answered that it was because of General S——.

"Why because of S——?" I asked.

Then she told me!

I felt as though the day was turning to night, that life was unendurable and the world too awful a place to live in. How could any man live through such an hour of humiliation!

I felt as though I couldn't stand it, that I must cry aloud with the anguish of it, I felt as though I were suffocating; the thought was not bearable, not bearable!

They say he had been a coward, that he had turned tail and run, dragging his brigade with him! Yes, no doubt there is no excuse for such a thing, it is an unforgivable crime, but the punishment is still more monstrous than the crime. Much better shoot him, a thousand times better shoot him than such degradation!

I have known S—— ever since I came to the country; he was always smiling, always spick and span, rich, successful, aggressively pleased with himself and life and Fate and humanity. He had the best horses, the richest wife, the most comfortable house, the broadest smile, the most bragging tongue, and being a cheerful fellow he was a friend of the children. A good eater, a good drinker, a great smoker, a great talker, the one always chosen to go abroad on different missions; a man I never specially appreciated,

but who was a companion of all our happier, lighter days, who had been an officer in my regiment, to end like this . . . like this.

All day I could think of nothing else; in a hundred ways I imagined to myself that dreadful scene; the gloating, cynical, inquisitive public, all Jassy invited to see his downfall. To be brought out, to stand helpless and there, beneath God's sky, to have his "rank" torn from him, to stand up and not to die. I cannot bear it . . . I simply cannot bear it. Somehow I go half mad when I think of what it must mean, especially as lurking at the back of my mind I have a sort of feeling as though there was some mistake somewhere, as though he was being too harshly judged; I suppose in war-time one has to make certain examples, but is this one really just?

Jassy, February 9th/22nd, 1917.

It is too trying, I cannot get my strength back again, and all these exhausting discussions with all sorts of people are almost more than I can stand; but what can I do but fight on and on according to the line of duty that I have set myself, trying to induce others to work, to arrive at some necessary solution, not to give way, to make superhuman efforts, to do the impossible under impossible circumstances? If only each man would do his share faithfully, the deadly despair of the situation could be dealt with a little, just a little! I am not asking for miracles, I am asking for effort and the will to help! I am asking them to pull together, honestly without quarrels and hatred. Is this so impossible?

I want a little of the faith that "removes mountains," and find it hardly anywhere, and I am actually being accused of mixing myself up in things that are no business of mine. I do not imagine that my small efforts can better the absolutely terrifying state of affairs; I have no illusions that with my small means I can relieve the situation, but as long as there is breath in my body, a thought in my brain, a penny in my pocket, I mean to do my utmost, my very utmost, to relieve all the suffering and awaken all the energies I possibly can. This is my right, and I shall fight against all those who do not do their duty and who will not work.

I may be destined to break my heart over all this without obtaining any results, but then there would still be time to die in harness like a horse who falls when his strength is spent.

And work I shall on and on, relentlessly, restlessly, never matter what it may cost me, never matter if the effort be a thousand times greater than the result!

All I hear is fearful; I have to shut up my heart so as not to suffer it all, I have to put a dark cloth over my brain so as not to perceive visions that would drive me mad.

And the worst is they will not leave me alone, they always begin over and over again, fruitless, exhausting discussions which never come to an end and give no result. Finally at the end of a day when I could stand no more I exclaimed:

"The doctors tell me to keep quiet or I shall never recover; at least if I am to go against their orders and do harm to myself let it be for the good of something, not for futile, sterile arguments that lead to nothing and only kill my heart, my courage, my faith and hope."

Jassy, February 11th/24th, 1917 (Saturday).

To-day the good news was brought me that the little Grand Duke Alexis, heir to the Russian throne, has sent me five wagons full of presents for our soldiers; they have just arrived and it is I who am to distribute them.

I take this as a sign that God doesn't quite forsake me at the moment when with all my might I am trying to help.

I have asked Nando to let me keep Carol here, instead of his going back to Head-quarters. There life is too uniform, he has too little to do and he is keen to work. We are going to arrange to send him from place to place, inspecting, inquiring, looking into things. I shall also get him to go with linen and provisions to different regiments; it is good that he should see things with his own eyes, but he must never go with empty hands; I shall fill his hands for him because the misery is so great.

In spite of difficulties and objections and endless impediments there are a few things that I can do, and they must be done now immediately during this crisis of atrocious want.

It looks as though this terrible black typhus is becoming virulent ; even poor Costescu of the police, who always follows me everywhere, is also down with this sickness, I am afraid. There are endless calamities ahead if this epidemic spreads.

Jassy, Monday, February 13th/26th, 1917.

Nothing special to relate, am still kept in bed, which exasperates me.

Costescu is really very ill, his case causes much anxiety, because according to the doctors, as he had been inoculated with the anti-typhus serum he ought to have been immune. But I wish him to be nursed in my house, not in a hospital. The weather is suddenly warmer and there is a tremendous thaw. Carol motored with great difficulty to Bârnova to take provisions from me to the regiments quartered there. He found great misery but things already on the mend.

Long talks with Nando and Barbo Stirbey about the general situation and what steps should be taken in several directions.

Ileana goes out daily with bread, biscuits and a thermos of tea and rum to feed the more miserable creatures she meets on the streets ; she is a curiously earnest-minded little girl, and seeing how I try to help everywhere she also wants to do her share. In the afternoon Mignon often goes with her ; in the morning Mignon works in her hospital.

I never eat my bread now but always put it aside so that the children can take it when they go in search of the hungry.

Carol has a bad sore throat and I hope that he will not also be ill ; I explained to him how to look after his throat for the night, so he may possibly be quite well the next morning. He is working hard just now and making himself useful ; he likes working under my direction and I am pleased to have him as my right hand.

I am sick of bed, I shall now ignore temperature and take up my usual life again. For two days they have given me no more medicine, which makes me feel much better.

I am afraid Simky is also going down with "grippe."

Jassy, Tuesday, February 14th/27th, 1917.

Beautiful weather! Spring is coming but with it, alas, no good tidings. I hear only of misery, hunger and sickness, also, alas, of mismanagement.

Got up for the first time after more than two weeks in bed. I felt rather like a ghost and top-heavy as though I had lost ballast and were floating uncertainly over the waters. My little cocker, Dana, was mad with joy to see me on my feet again, and everybody greeted me, touchingly pleased to have me back in their midst.

I found the noise at meals rather hard to stand, it made my head swim, but I held my own courageously and then crept to bed again, quite at the end of my tether.

At eleven I received the mayor of the town, a certain Racovița, who has married a girl I knew very well, whom the young Crown Prince of Germany had once admired. The mayor is young and eager to work, although the conditions he has to work in are almost desperate. The town is stuffed full with ten times its ordinary population, epidemics are raging on all sides, food becomes scarce, transport almost impossible, next to no horses, and the few that remain dying for want of fodder. These miserable little skeleton animals sent to bring in hay either die on the way or eat up half of the provisions they were to bring to town.

Having been in bed for some time, I had a chance of quietly reviewing the whole situation and by slow degrees I began to understand what had created the incredible chaos through which we are labouring.

The trouble and disaster came so quickly that people lost their heads and took some time to realize the situation, and when they awoke from their torpor, it was too late; the state of confusion and mismanagement was such that no human power could put it right.

Our army was beaten and had to retreat in disorder, abandoning one town after the other, and with those towns our hospitals, depots and provisions had also to be abandoned. The wounded were evacuated *if* possible, the most precious necessities saved *if* possible, but how often it was not possible! Add to this panic, disorder, confusion, many

trying to profit from the general chaos, the impossibility of reviewing the situation, the eternal terror that the next position would also have to be surrendered; the country becoming smaller and smaller, poorer and poorer and more panic-stricken, a single railroad on which everything and everybody tried to move, evacuation, transport, ammunition, refugees.

The Russians having been called to our rescue, came pouring in from the opposite direction, and they also needed the railway, and all this to be coped with by people who had more or less lost their heads; indeed, it was an almost superhuman task!

The Russians who came as saviours soon proved to be an added difficulty. They came in never-ending masses, and we were pleased to see them, for they represented for us a strength that would stop the enemy's advance; they meant the hope of keeping the last shred of our territory. And at first no one thought of that other danger, *Famine!*

These countless hordes of Russians had to be fed! Transport was slow and insufficient, therefore they laid hands upon all that could be bought up. Their money was always forthcoming, and their appetite was huge. The peasants, little realizing that in a short time money would be completely useless as there would be nothing more to buy, gave their all without reserve!

I have often sat at my window watching the Russians marching down the street. In compact ranks they came and they were always singing—strange solemn chants, the treble and bass voices alternately taking up the same refrain, most impressive to hear and rather disturbing; there was something fateful and mournfully dismal about their Russian songs.

Like the locusts of old, these slow-moving, well-fed, steady-going, earth-coloured Russians, their name being legion, devoured the land. They had already two years of war behind them, were accustomed to look after themselves, to make provision, to foresee! And little by little those who had been greeted as saviours turned into a mighty danger none had anticipated.

Lately I have tried to concentrate my mind, to look back-

wards and forwards and all round, to try and conceive the whole of the disastrous situation, and sometimes my courage almost fails me before what I perceive.

Added to all the rest, two months of bitter cold winter, such as has not been remembered in the land for a generation.

The regiments that had to be re-formed were quartered in deplorable conditions often in far-off, miserable little villages lost amongst the hills. Owing to the snow, transport became almost out of the question and hunger, cold, misery and sickness set in. It was nearly impossible to get from place to place, and the Roumanians, in happier years unaccustomed to effort, did not know how to cope with such a situation; in consequence disorder, no little dishonesty and no efficient inspections, no systematic supervision.

I saw it all coming, without however realizing the details. Now it all lies before me like a horrible picture suddenly revealed to my gaze. I have tried to use all the power I have to induce those responsible to make the necessary efforts, not to sit still and moan, not to confess themselves beaten, but to concentrate all their strength and help for all they are worth. The Roumanians, however, are more or less fatalists; they always imagine that God, or Fate, or Chance will step in at the last hour and save them! But being of English origin my motto is: Help yourself and God will help you, and this I have been trying to preach but with small result.

Now they are waking up; but to face what? A situation so formidable, so despairing, so intricate that it well could make the bravest heart quail!

Here comes the mayor asking me "*tout mon concours*"! In other days it might have made me smile, that the mayor should have come to the Queen to ask her help! But in these days I have learned not to smile at such demands, but quietly to take up my part of the burden and go ahead, do what I can.

I told him to ask to see Carol, who would be able to help him in the transport question, etc. The man is at his wits' end, as for months no cleaning of the town has been possible; there have been no men to do the work, no horses, no motors, no carriages, the army having requisitioned every-

thing and the few horses which had remained to them having died of misery and hunger.

Prezan came for lunch. He rejoices with us over the splendid provisions sent to me by little Alexis for my soldiers. I feel quite rich, for I have a wonderful supply of miscellaneous things: linen, tobacco, soap, biscuits, pressed tea, gloves, stockings, pencils, pen-knives, sugar, salt, flour, smoked fish, felt boots, caps, coats, shirts, nuts and sunflower seed (which the peasants love eating), writing-paper and postcards and goodness knows what not else.

Everybody who comes to see me carries off something for their own special poor; it is a blessing to be able to give.

After tea had long talk with Stirbey and Ballif. They want to put Ballif into a big, responsible, military position, but Ballif is unwilling to leave me and he also declares that he has been too long out of contact with all that is going on to be able to accept. He would not feel justified in so doing.

Carol continues to be useful and to do his work well. I continue to have a temperature, but I have thrown my thermometer away. Poor Costescu is very ill.

A minor disaster: Ileana's favourite pony, Tango, a queer-coloured little animal, a sort of earth-coloured roan with long, flowing cream-coloured mane and tail, has actually had to have his tail cut off. This being a time of infection a little wound at the root of his tail festered, became bad and the beautiful tail had to come off. Of course Ileana wept.

Jassy, Thursday, February 16th/March 1st, 1917.

I am trying as much as possible to take up my usual life again, but I am still shaky.

This morning a lady I am very fond of came to see me. I rather dreaded the interview because I foresaw what she was going to talk about, but she was kind and conciliatory and very affectionate. She came to ask me to see her husband more often, that it did him good, but I told her quite truthfully that *he* did not do *me* good and that after a visit from her husband I always felt more discouraged, and that

in general I avoided seeing him because of this. After a talk with him, I had the feeling each time that all the bones had been taken out of my body and that nothing was left of me with which to continue struggling and working; he depressed me hopelessly.

Also Lala de Belloy with dear old Sœur Pucci came to see me, a very saddened Lala, working with all her heart for one of the hospitals, aided by her daughter, Collette Brancovan. Each day the situation in the hospitals becomes more difficult; at the present time there are more sick than wounded. The death-rate is much higher, the hospitals are over-crowded so that the men are sent away before completely cured and we have no hospitals for convalescents; therefore these unfortunate beings who are supposed to be well enough to rejoin their regiments, are not in a condition to do so and yet have nowhere to go! But the hospitals find it impossible to keep them as there are already two and sometimes three in one bed, and more and more sick pouring in. What shall I do?

Sœur Pucci is in a hospital beyond the town working with the excellent little French doctor, Clunet, of whom I spoke when I first reached Jassy. It is an isolation hospital for infectious cases. I had the pleasure of giving her quantities of provisions, so she went off very delighted. I also promised to visit them soon.

Another beautiful present arrived for me from Empress Alexandra, a quantity of linen, medicines and provisions for the hospitals.

After dinner I went early to bed, but first had a long talk with Carol, who is really becoming my great help.

Jassy, Friday, February 24th/March 9th, 1917.

Nando arrived from Zorleni for breakfast. Things are not quiet politically, there is a party which is furious because Bratianu is kept in power.

Prezan and Zaharoff were invited to lunch. I rather like little old Zaharoff, I think he is an honest fellow, though his lack of French is a drawback. However, I get accustomed to this and learn to help him out with what he wants to say.

There is trouble from the Stafka; they speak of taking

troops away from Roumania, which would be too bad. After having come here with so many transport difficulties and after eating up all the provisions of the country, it would be too unfair to withdraw their troops without their having done anything to help us.

Little Zaharoff is indignant and says in his broken French : "Ça honte pour Russie." At lunch he said something very funny to me. They were discussing the utility of the King's going to Russia to talk to the Tsar :

"Roi doit aller, mais vous allez avec Roi, faut aller avec Roi. Roi parle, Tsar parle, moi parle, militaires parlent, vous souriez. Tsar dit OQuai ! [oui]. Russie aime beaucoup vous."

Weather was beautiful, motored through the snow with my two daughters, our car full of various provisions which we divided among the miserable, hungry-looking soldiers we met along the way. Alas, there are many too many miserable soldiers running, or rather limping and dragging themselves about. I absolutely must find a way of helping them. The great difficulty is to find a place for them. Jassy is crammed so full. Perhaps I can build a wooden barracks for them. I am racking my brain to find a solution.

Jassy, Saturday, February 25th/March 10th, 1917.

Fine day, but tremendous thaw and awful dirt.

Had the joy of receiving a big donation from the English Red Cross. After lunch set off with Carol and Mignon in a motor to visit a regiment quartered in a small, miserable village. Up to the present it was impossible because of the snow. Now the snow is melting so one can get through, but the mess is inconceivable.

A chilly drive through a melancholy landscape, thaw and filth, bodies of dead horses strewn along the road ; the village itself squalid, wretched, dirty, forsaken, buried in mud and melting snow. Wandering about between crumbling huts, pale, ragged spectres, ghosts of soldiers with yellow faces, with sunken eyes, their clothes in tatters, remnants of what was once a regiment ; they had been suffering from cold, hunger and sickness. I asked where the doctors were. Some of them had died, some were down with the terrible

typhus. Where were the officers? They too are half of them dead, half of them in the hospital.

Sadder sight I never saw. Luckily I came with full hands, had a motor behind me stuffed with provisions, of tea, biscuits, sugar, soap, tobacco. For the officers I had brought a special quality of tea, chocolate, cigarettes and also stockings. For the most grievously sick I had rum, brandy and medicines. Mignon was cruelly impressed by all we saw, but my children followed me without complaint. They are getting accustomed to these terrible conditions and learn to overcome their natural shrinking before such heart-rending sights. But sometimes I see waves of horror filling Mignon's gentle blue eyes; but she has a strong, kind heart and is ready to do her share.

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Chapter XIV

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Jassy, Tuesday, February 28th/March 13th, 1917.

THIS morning at about 9 a.m. Stirbey appeared with the disturbing news that a revolution had broken out in Petersburg. We do not yet exactly know what form it has taken, but later in the day there was more precise news; the regiments brought out to fire on the population refused to do so and distributed their cartridges amongst the revolutionaries after killing their officers!

I hope Ducky is not in danger, I hope the fire will not spread, it would be dreadful for our cause, and, oh, what a disaster in every way!

After lunch drove out with Elisabetta in a motor laden with provisions. We hunted up the poorest quarters of the town and distributed many things, food and sugar and clothing such as woollen gloves, stockings, mufflers and shirts. We got into incredible regions where the world seemed to come to an end in mud. I also visited a hospital which an energetic little French doctor has put into excellent order; it used to be a sickening place, now it is still poor but neat, tidy and clean.

Hurried back for an audience with Bratianu; he was very agreeable but we did not agree on every subject. Of course we were very anxious about what is going on in Russia.

Jassy, Wednesday, March 1st/14th, 1917.

News from Russia very bad. The troops in Petrograd are in full mutiny. It is even said that they are marching towards Tsarskoe and that divisions have been sent from the front to quell the revolt. It remains to be seen if these troops will be faithful or if the revolutionary ideas have spread through the rest of the army, which would of course



THE KING DECORATING SOME OF OUR MEN.

be intensely serious. What would happen to us if things went wrong in Russia is not even to be contemplated. It would mean utter and complete disaster, it would mean the end of everything !

At one moment during the day the news sounded a little more promising, but towards evening it was much worse again.

Jassy, Friday, March 3rd/16th, 1917.

Astounding news from Russia that Nicky has abdicated for himself and his son, that he has designated his brother Michael as his successor, and that the Grand Duke Nicolas Nicolaivitch is to be Generalissimo ! I can hardly realize the whole thing, it seems so dreadful ! We have hardly any details, but those we have received are bad enough.

When the Tsar received the news that there was a revolution in Petrograd, he started off from the Stafka to go to Tsarskoe, but he could not get there ! They blocked his train and all he could do was to go northwards to Russki's army, where as far as we can understand he received two deputies from the Duma and signed his abdication.

One hardly dares picture to oneself what hours he must have gone through, and not being able to get to Tsarskoe to Alix and his children who were no doubt in danger. Who knows even if he had any news of her, because the revolution is, it seems, entirely directed against them and their government, and especially against the Empress and the minister Protopopoff who was Alix's favourite and whom she insisted that Nicky should keep in spite of the ill-feeling it created. What an hour for that woman, who because of her fanaticism has brought about this crisis ; she who would listen to no one except Rasputin, and separated herself little by little from all the members of the family, then from the whole of society, never showing herself anywhere any more, shutting herself up either in Tsarskoe or in the Crimea, surrounding herself with quite unknown people who had a disastrous influence upon her, and whom she imposed upon the Emperor.

Into the bargain, she was passionately ambitious, absolutely convinced that her judgment was infallible, that she

alone understood Russia, and the need of the country and people.

Gradually she allowed hatred to enter her heart. Behaving like the tyrants of old, she wished everything to be done according to her own desire, and unfortunately completely swaying the Emperor's will, giving him wrong advice, to which he imagined he *must* listen, probably because he too was a mystic, and believed in predictions and false prophets.

Fault upon fault was committed; the Imperial family tried to warn Alix. Even Ducky, who had a difficult position, being her ex-sister-in-law, had the courage to go to her and warn her about the smouldering discontent, showing her how she was taking the wrong turning, how she was gradually losing the love of high and low. Courageously, Ducky told her the whole dreadful truth, but in vain. Blinded by her faith in herself and advised by Rasputin, she believed that she alone was rightly informed, that she alone understood the situation. She was worse than blind, she was a fanatic, and her husband was as clay in her hands! And this is what she has brought upon him and her children and her country!

What may her feelings be to-day? How does she bear it, separated, as she is, from her husband, he not able to get to her and all her children down with measles. A ghastly situation.

I sit and ponder over it and to me it seems tragic and fearful beyond words.

How this is all going to end lies still in the dark. What influence will it have on the War, on our fate? Tragic questions to which I find no answer.

Mossoloff came to see me, very anxious, having heard from General Alexieff that the abdication of Nicky and the coming to the throne of Misha does not seem to satisfy the people. It is as though they are inclined towards a republic!

The whole thing is mysterious and dreadful and I am horribly anxious for Ducky. I do hope the troops at the front won't mutiny.

Took my usual outing in the afternoon, my motor full of food and clothing. It was sunny but intensely cold. On the way home we met a whole convoy of prisoners carrying

logs of wood on their backs, so we stopped and began to divide our provisions amongst them. They were mad with joy. Surrounding our motor like famished wolves, they nearly tore the things out of our hands. Elisabetta was with me. We gave everything we had, they were quite frantic for sugar and cigarettes. Poor things, I am so pleased we stopped, though at first I was afraid that there were too many of them and that my provisions would not suffice. They were so excited that a moment came when their heavy logs were bumping about over our heads in a most uncomfortable way. They were Germans, Hungarians and Austrians. Of all sad sights, prisoners are the saddest. I would always go out of my way to help a prisoner, no matter what nationality.

When we received the news of the Emperor's abdication the King and I sent him this telegram which, strange as it may seem, safely reached his hands.

A.S.M. L'EMPEREUR NICOLAS.

En ces circonstances douloureusement solennelles où Tu as pris une décision si grave, notre pensée se dirige avec une affection émue vers Toi et Alix. Nous tenons à Te dire en ces moments d'épreuve notre reconnaissance et celle de notre peuple pour l'amitié constante que Tu n'as pas cessé de nous témoigner.

FERDINAND, MISSY.

And not only did Nicky receive our telegram but he sent us an answer which reached us in his own handwriting, and of which I give the facsimile on page 154.

Veuillez transmettre à Sa Majesté le Roi Ferdinand de Roumanie le télégramme suivant :

"Je vous remercie de cœur tous les deux pour votre touchant message. Suis encore séparé de ma famille. Que le bon Dieu vous bénisse ainsi que le peuple Roumain et que le Seigneur vous accorde la victoire finale et la réalisation de toutes vos aspirations."

NICOLAS.

I cannot read that ultimate message received from the quiet, gentle cousin for whom I had always felt such sympathy without deep emotion and that last sentence: "May God grant you final victory and the fulfilment of all your

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toutes vos espérances.

Nicolas

hopes" has a quiet bigness about it. He was losing everything, his every hope had crumbled, but in a last cry of friendship he wishes for us a better fate. May God rest his soul in peace. . . .

Days of great anxiety followed where news came in little scraps, news which was often conflicting.

Besides my enormous anxiety for our country, I was also torn to pieces with fear about what might be happening to my sister. It was long before I could get into direct contact with her and during that time I was tortured by a thousand visions of what she might be suffering, of the dangers she might encounter.

So as better to stand my ever-growing uneasiness I redoubled my work amongst the sick and wounded in all the hospitals, also I went more and more amongst the wretched sufferers in the desolate outskirts of the town, here, there and everywhere. I think there are few queens who have seen such sights, who have been in places of such abject, unimaginable misery. I allowed nothing to appal me; it was a period of fantastic distress and people saw in me a supreme hope and their belief in me increased my strength.

In primitive countries there is one figure all men instinctively turn to when in distress; The Mother. All sons in these days having been torn from their mothers, I had in a way become the "Universal Mother," a symbol of what every man searches for when in pain. I have known old men of seventy call me Mother!

People clamoured for me on every side; when a situation or disaster was most appalling, or a hospital most miserably neglected, I had to go and see it with my own eyes. Miracles were expected of me; when all else failed, their cries mounted towards me, their Queen, and because of their faith in me I found a thousand ways of helping, and even if materially I could do very little, my presence amongst the most desperate and destitute still brought a ray of hope.

From dawn to dark I went amongst them, everywhere, in no matter what place, no matter through what filth and infection. I never shut my ear to a single cry for help; somehow even fatigue seemed to drop from me, my body

hardly counted any more, and although I did not then possess a closed motor I seemed to be able to stand the most piercing cold, and only on rare occasions did I have to give up.

One of the most dreadful sights I ever saw was what we called the "*trriage*" at the station. This was a sort of "clearing place" where the sick were brought; soldiers arrived from different parts of the country, and they were kept there until room could be found for them in our different hospitals. Dante never invented a more ghastly hell.

I was called as usual to come and help, as the infection bred here was a danger for the whole of Jassy. I wandered through a series of dark, bare wooden barracks, where the sick and dying lay huddled together on the floor, often stepping over corpses so as to reach those holding out their hands towards me, and I am not exaggerating when I say that they were covered from head to foot with lice! At first I could not understand what was that white sand or dust which lay in every fold of their clothes, and could hardly believe it when I was told that it was neither dust nor sand, but lice! And it was those lice, it seems, which carried the typhus infection!

This was the first time I thoroughly understood how dangerous this was, because how could I defend myself against an insect no larger than a grain of sand?

I gathered all my strength together to have this horrible place energetically taken in hand and with the help of Dr. Cantacuzène and some others we finally cleared it up. Many brave and faithful helpers were found, and foremost amongst them was a Madame Popp, wife of one of our younger doctors, a Frenchwoman by birth. Her work was admirable in every way as she was both practical, devoted and merciful! I even got the King to allow me to use one of his own A.D.C.s, Colonel Țanescu, as sanitary inspector of the work we were undertaking, one who had sufficient authority to make himself obeyed.

Madame Popp escaped the infection, but more than one of our brave helpers lost their lives in the cruel struggle.

I got into the habit of always having a motor packed

full with every kind of provision, so that I could help immediately *sur place* any misery I encountered. My diary relates day by day these visits to every possible and impossible place.

To keep up the spirits of the troops on the front so that my thought should penetrate also there, where I could not go in person, I took to writing articles in the paper which was most read by the soldiers. These were messages of encouragement and I sent them, and in response received many a touching answer.

Ballif was a precious collaborator, he always gave severe advice with nothing merciful about it, he often made me weep; but I had the strength to recognize when I must listen to him and I am grateful to him for never having spared me. He saw that I must not be allowed to weaken. Together with him I elaborated a plan for sending Carol from place to place, laden with my gifts; I wished my son to be better known and better loved.

I had by degrees bought up great supplies of food-stuffs, clothing, medicines and all that was most needed in hospitals, and gratefully remember how liberally I was helped in this by the Allied Red Cross, including the Russians who were always generous givers.

Needing a steady, trustworthy man to control all my depots, I chose Dr. Mamulea to become the head of this organization. He proved himself invaluable and even to-day, sixteen years afterwards, he is still at the head of my charitable organizations.

We instituted a regular transport of provisions from Russia, which for some inexplicable reason kept on reaching me for quite a time, even after the revolution had broken out.

Yes, it was a period of almost superhuman stress, when the exultation of sacrifice multiplied my usual strength, so that I never at any time completely broke down.

Chapter XV

THE TYPHUS TERROR

Jassy, Friday, March 17th/30th, 1917.

I HAVE taken to riding again ; it does me an enormous lot of good and is the one thing that gives me back some of my high spirits. Ileana often comes out with me on her tailless Tango ; she sits very upright in her little Cossack's dress and wears a high grey astrakhan cap. A brave, lovable child. I have been riding the precious white thoroughbred Ardeal, a splendid creature, full of go and something of a handful.

Had the immense relief of receiving a letter from Ducky : it is a tremendous joy to me to have news of her at last.

She writes that they lived through days such as one reads of in history, days both of fear and danger, the mob crying and clamouring beneath their windows, shooting in the streets, no safety anywhere. She and Kyrill had been in sympathy with the movement for obtaining a freer government, their ideas were very liberal and the new Government were their friends ; but the people having taken the upper hand, and the new masters having to make concessions to the mob, they will probably be sacrificed for the sake of keeping momentary peace in the interior. It was a brave and noble letter, just as one would imagine she would write. She tells me that Diamandi, our Minister, has been a brick through thick and thin ; defying all danger, he came to see them continually whilst many closer friends forsook them in the hour of distress.

At ten I am leaving so as to visit the cavalry regiments in the north of Moldavia.

In the train. Saturday, March 18th/31st, 1917.

Spent the whole day inspecting the cavalry division; it did me good to be amongst the troops, and gave me a less sad impression about our army. In and round about Jassy the misery is so very evident.

I visited fourteen different regiments in eight different villages. Everything was extraordinarily well arranged as things always are when Ballif has them entirely in hand. We started at half-past eight from the station of Veresti and made the circuit which Ballif had drawn out for me.

In each village the regiments were lined up in some open place and I walked down their ranks whilst they cheered. I must say they mostly looked well and were well dressed, the greater part of them very young men. They were all on foot, the horses not having been able to recover as well as the men. In each village the school or the *mairie* had been taken to make a hospital. Wherever I went, I found them in a satisfactory state, quite clean, and numbers not too great, but of course very poor.

At Hantesti, Dumbrăveni and Salcea, I found a lot of typhus *exantématique*. Especially the 10th Rosiors had much suffered, also my regiment.

Wherever I went everything was decorated with the early flowers of spring, especially snowdrops and mauve crocuses, which was very pretty. I have been so starved of flowers that this abundance was a real joy. At Zimnicea they had strewn the ground I was to pass over with mauve crocuses, in another place everything was decorated with snowdrops, in another with snowdrops and scillas. The entire population crushed around me filling my arms with flowers, so that I was able to give fresh little bunches to all the sick. Added to the sweets and cigarettes I brought them, it gave them great pleasure.

The day was fine and Carol was with me, having joined me early in the morning from Botosani. It did my heart good to be once more lustily cheered by our troops, and when I finally reached Dumbrăveni about luncheon-time, I was much moved by the way they received me.

To hear our national anthem made the tears come to my eyes.

Here at Dumbrăveni there was a big hospital, well kept and roomy, but many very seriously ill. I brought quantities of things for all the troops, but I could not distribute them myself, so left them with the different generals and colonels to divide, so much for each division or brigade. I also brought many things for the hospitals.

At Dumbrăveni I lunched with all my officers in Leon Ghycă's house. It was nice to see them all again; several faces, of course were missing, some were new. Leon Ghycă and his brother were also there, but I was the guest of my Roşiors. It was very nice, but being a military lunch it lasted too long. Carol, refusing to accept a place of honour, sat amongst the quite young officers at the end of the table where there was much fun and joking. After lunch we started off again to visit Pierre Grecianu's division; he used to be our A.D.C. He met us at Salcea, looking extremely spick and span, as he always does. At Salcea there was also a big hospital. Alas, we are losing many doctors because of this dreadful typhus. In the end, they all seem to get it, as it is caught through vermin against which it is very difficult to defend oneself in times of dirt and disorder.

We finished up in Burdujeni, which is the frontier between Roumania and Bucovina. There I found Elise Grecianu, who took me into her little house for a welcome moment of rest when I was able to tidy up a little. Our faces had been covered by dust and mud in turns.

Jassy, Monday, March 20th/April 2nd, 1917.

Beautiful weather but very dry and dusty.

After breakfast started off with Nando to Villa Greerul to inquire about Doctor Clunet and the other patients reported to be down with typhus, as I am very anxious about Dr. Clunet. It would be tragic if he succumbed to the scourge he has been so bravely fighting. We found him very bad and quite unconscious, but Doctor le Laurier, who for the moment has taken his place, is not quite without hope. Some of the others were better.

We visited every room and talked to every patient who was in a condition to be talked to. The house was golden with sunshine, but the rooms full of suffering. Four of the sisters are ill, one, an old woman, is very bad.

Sœur Pucci, as usual, was up and about doing everything for everybody, always cheerful, even funny.

We visited everything, even her washing which was done by two old men of the militia in the garden fountain. The shabby old fellows wanted cigarettes, which they promptly got from me. The road to get to Villa Greerul is, alas, almost unbearably bad and tries every bone in one's body; it is a disastrous, cruel road.

General Berthelot and his A.D.C. Marshal came to lunch. Both were cheery. Berthelot is not too pessimistic, even about our army, but he deplores the Russian revolution, understanding the danger, and wondering as we do what the result will be.

I keep thinking of Ducky and worrying about what she may be enduring and about how it will end for her. I cannot imagine anything so cruel as suddenly to be nothing in your own country but a scarcely tolerated looker-on.

Took another good ride this afternoon, finding a few new places for galloping. I rode my favourite Grui Sănger, taking Barbo Stirbey with me and lending him Coconas; although a splendid black thoroughbred, magnificent to look at, Coconas is too phlegmatic for my taste.

I am writing the second volume of "The Country that I Love." I read the chapter I had just finished about Cotroceni to Nicky, describing our garden, the old church, and speaking about Mircea; suddenly he threw his arms around my neck, bursting into tears. I had no idea that these memories would stir him so much. We sat a long time hand in hand talking about Mircea and all that we have lost.

Jassy, Tuesday, March 21st/April 3rd, 1917.

Weather has become extraordinarily warm, and stifling dust fills the whole air, which is exceedingly unpleasant.

Directly after breakfast I started with Simky to inspect my wooden barracks for convalescent soldiers. It is getting

on, will be completed on Saturday and will be just the right thing. Stopped at every corner to feed poor destitute creatures met along the road, I also tried to give sugar to the miserable horses, but generally they will not take it. Visited a particularly forsaken little hospital in the village close by; here also I distributed my usual gifts. The doctor has fallen victim to this terrible typhus, so that the sick are very much neglected; I promised to come back as soon as I could to bring some good soup for the invalids. I never saw anything more horribly pathetic than that hospital!

Before lunch I saw Stirbey, who came to bring me the news from Russia—it is certainly not satisfactory and confusingly contradictory.

The Swiss Minister came to lunch and Mr. Andrews, the American Chargé d’Affaires, a very nice man.

After lunch I started off with Mignon for Villa Greerul, to take some food to Colonel Holban, who is on the mend—fresh white bread and butter, and an excellent Roumanian soup with chicken in it (*bortch*).

On the way there I stopped at my sad little hospital, where from time to time I visit those particularly wretched creatures who are so awfully ill and who get so little care, though they are looked after in a rudimentary sort of way by a medical orderly who helps them according to his lights. When I get into these very particularly infectious holes, I leave my children outside. As I was leaving the barracks I met a Catholic priest, who had just come down from Villa Greerul, and he announced to me the sad news that Clunet was dead! This is a cruel blow, I had so hoped for his recovery, he, who had run the whole hospital there, who with relentless energy and wonderful courage had put everything in order, overcoming difficulties that were mountain-high. And now, he is dead, victim of his own devotion and abnegation. Oh, it was indeed sad news!

I arrived to find the whole house in tears. His poor wife was sitting on the bed where he lay so peaceful, but so pale and so still, he who had been the very expression of life and energy. They had been a tremendously devoted

couple and his wife is expecting a baby in August. She lost her first child just before coming here and her husband had brought her out with him so as to help her over her grief, and now, she loses him and remains alone in a foreign country!

I tried to find words of sympathy and consolation, but there are none at such moments. On a bed beside Clunet lay the poor old nun who had also just died. Her starched white head-dress framed her sad old face as with the wings of a sea-gull. There was an extraordinary atmosphere of peace about these two who had died so faithfully doing their duty towards all men.

Jassy, Thursday, March 23rd/April 5th, 1917.

His Majesty has gone to the front, where he is to make a declaration to the troops, a declaration which we have seriously talked over together, he, I and Prince Stirbey, a declaration in which he will tell his soldiers that they will receive part of the land as recompense when they return from the war.

For me this was a full day. Early in the morning I wrote an appeal for my country to be sent to America. Spent two hours in the military hospital which is in good order. Old Dr. Bogdan was, as usual, beaming and satisfied, pink and white and fresh looking. He is on excellent terms with his invalids, was delighted with everything I brought him, delighted with his personnel, delighted with himself; it is so seldom nowadays to see someone who is delighted that it did me good.

Had an audience or two and then directly after lunch started off with Ballif and Madame Mavrodi to a far-off village where two artillery regiments are quartered. Arrived there without mishap upon a pretty decent high road. I was received with great joy; my coming was unexpected, and I had to spend a long time visiting the hospitals organized with much energy under the intelligent direction of a French doctor. They had transformed a huge sort of barn into a large ward. There were many, many soldiers down with typhus. There were also several smaller hospitals. I visited them all and was most gratefully received

wherever I went; my humble gifts are always a great joy. I have noticed a curious thing, that even the most sick, even those in full delirium seem to recognize me, and when I bend over them whisper my name.

When I was leaving, one of the officers told me that in a village much farther off our friend Colonel Radu Rossetti was down with typhus, but only quite recently. I decided immediately to try and get there in spite of impossible roads. We soon came to a spot where the motor could not pass. Thereupon a moment of confusion, but I was firmly decided to get there somehow. As luck would have it I met a French doctor in a ramshackle, shaky little carriage who was just returning from the village I was trying to reach. Without more ado, I decided to get into this carriage with Ballif and the French doctor, abandoning Madame Mavrodi in the motor.

We had a killing drive over impossible roads deep with mud, our carriage running mostly on two wheels up against the side of a steep, sticky bank. The horses were miserable little fleas. The road became worse and worse, till finally even the carriage could get no farther, so we did the last part of the way on foot. Luckily I had high boots on under my white nurse's dress.

I was mightily cheered by the troops when I finally reached my destination, but found it very difficult to pass with dignity down their ranks as the ground was so terrible, a mass of dried mud, cut up into holes, so that at each step one risked twisting one's ankle.

Finally we found Rossetti upon a camp-bed in a quite decent little house, which was, I believe, the school. For the moment he was pretty cheery, full of talk, flushed by fever and tremendously eager to tell me all that he had tried to do for his troops in this forsaken little hole. I believe he has been wonderful, and I hope to goodness that he has not really caught that terrible sickness; it would be too sad. We always speak English together.

I was actually offered a cup of tea, which I accepted with joy, as having a cold I was dreadfully thirsty, my throat painfully dry.

I had no time to visit the hospitals, as it was very late

and the sick were scattered about in different houses, but I promised to come back again, which I shall certainly do in spite of difficult roads. It is worth while coming if it gives such pleasure, and it is such a comfort to the sick.

We got back to our motor and Mavrodi in the same sort of incongruous way. By this time it was already night, but fortunately a beautiful moon.

I had made an arrangement that on the way back I should be met in the village of Galata by another motor with a large cauldron of good nourishing soup destined for a number of hungry, dilapidated wretches I had discovered in a miserable little corner, half *asile de nuit*, half hospital, a place of completest horror and misery.

It was quite dark when I arrived, and no lights in the house, but nevertheless I penetrated with my followers into this place of horror, and began feeding the human wreckage with my hot soup; the absolute sordid misery of the place defies description. The flotsam I found there heaped together could hardly be called human beings.

Some were sleeping on, and some under, a set of wooden tables, the dead huddled together with the dying. These were also victims of the dreadful typhus.

I gave soup, tea and bread to those well enough to partake of food, I also left some linen and clothes. The sight was the worst I had ever seen; the outcome of suffering and degraded humanity. As it was quite dark, my chauffeur had turned my motor lamps so as to light up the place. The glaring light revealed unforgettable sights of horror. We only reached home at half-past eight, everybody imagining that something had happened to us. My cold is none the better for this long and varied excursion; but I always have to ignore my colds.

Went to bed directly after dinner and set to work writing out some verses of the Bible for Jorga's newspaper; I know such splendid verses, and some so much to the point; I shall quote one out of Ezekiel, which I think suits present circumstances:

"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken and will strengthen that which was sick, but I

will destroy the fat and the strong ; I will feed them with judgment." (*Ezekiel xxxiv*, verse 16.)

This verse was, however, not sent to Jorga's newspaper !

Jassy, Friday, March 24th/April 6th, 1917.

The King has come back from the front very pleased. He has had two full and very satisfactory days, he made a declaration to the troops about recompense to be received after the war, about the land which because of their heroic defence of their country will be given them on a larger scale. He has brought good and happy impressions back from the front, where he also found the hospitals in excellent order.

At half-past ten, Prince Kropotkin came to take me to the train he is organizing, the one he and Ducky had started together. It made me sad, things have so changed. She was such a blessed help and now for a time, it is as though she no more existed. On the top of all my other sorrows there is this added grief and distress ! It was both a moral and material help to have her as a close neighbour, knowing that at any time I might call upon her kindness, sympathy and intelligence. Now I have no one within my reach.

The Russians who cared for the old regime now seem to cling to me, happy to have even a foreign queen in their midst. It must be hard to have suddenly no Emperor, no royal family, when all your life you were accustomed to consider them the centre of everything.

The train was nice and there were some charming sisters looking after it. To celebrate the occasion they had spread a big table near the train and were giving a good meal consisting of some excellent soup and a delicious dish of rice and bacon to some hungry Roumanian soldiers. It was all most appetizingly served on bright, clean, aluminium plates.

As there was a gale of wind to-day the dust was unbearable.

Poor Madame Clunet came to see me, but she did not accept my offer to stay with us here in the house. Her husband is to be buried on Monday, so she hasn't got the courage to leave his body, and afterwards she hopes to get off to France.



MY WHITE RED CROSS DRESS HAD BECOME A SYMBOL.

Clunet expressed the desire to be buried in the garden of Villa Greerul amongst his patients who had died before him. So sad to think that he was not allowed to live to end his work! I so well remember the first time I saw him in November, so full of energy and life, when he lifted me out of my own depression and sadness.

Prince Stirbey came for a late cup of tea. I had not seen him for several days, as he had been with the King at the front; he too brought back a good impression, he was the one who chiefly encouraged the King to speak to his troops, and to do it before others could take the initiative out of his hands.

My cold is very bad.

Jassy, Monday, March 27th/April 9th, 1917.

Major Georgescu ("little Georgie") has at last come back from Russia, looking very thin and hungry. Luckily he managed to bring us all the provisions I had ordered. He has had curious experiences and seen much. Poor Ducky can do nothing more for us for the moment, although she and her lady-in-waiting helped him all they could, and actually managed to get the train to leave with all we had bought.

The King has gone to Botosani to visit some schools. Lady Barclay came to announce to me the arrival of someone called Baker, who is, she declared, going to be most useful to us; she is going to put him at the head of the British Red Cross Provisions Depot, and she also hopes to get through him more material.

I do not like the look of things in Russia, they are going too far and are spreading a dangerous propaganda through their army, so one cannot help wondering how it will all end. America has finally declared war on Germany.

After lunch I did a little writing. I am writing a legend about Mount Athos. Mount Athos has always fascinated me.

I drove to see the Prezans; I had to talk to him about not sending the quite young officers, just come out of the schools to infected villages where they would catch the typhus. It would be too great a shame, too useless a sacrifice, besides really *not* practical.

Madame Prezan was much excited about politics, intensely opposed to the existing regime. Womanlike she expressed this in many words, giving way to personal bias. Some of the things she said were based upon truth, but I am in a position whence I can see all sides of the question, so I know also the danger and difficulty of a radical change during such perilous times.

On my return Jean Cantacuzène came to ask for two of my motor ambulances for the *triage* at the station, and immediately afterwards Madame Lucie Grecianu came to beg for things for her little hospital near her country place. There are so many needs, and everybody comes to me; alas, my hospital provisions are coming to an end; I have done nothing but give and give, and now there is hardly anything left, but I have plenty of food-stuffs.

After dinner I continued writing my legend.

Jassy, Easter Sunday, April 2nd/15th, 1917.

Easter Sunday, a beautiful spring day. Spent the morning bringing food to different troops. First to some recruits bivouacking at Copou. I was not at all satisfied with the state in which I found the men, so thin and weak looking, they need to be fed up and I had to make severe observations. I must try and give them wine: it is supposed to do wonders. Then I went with my children to a very populous part of Jassy where I brought things to my special protégés, the shabby old men of the commissariat, those that I call my old ravens, or *meine Hungergesellen*; they as well as the population of the slums, were delighted to have me amongst them and we exchanged many Easter greetings. The fruit trees were beginning to flower so that even the most wretched outskirts of the town had put on a festive look. On our way home we filled our motor with the first blackthorn, which had suddenly burst into bloom.

After lunch set off with Ballif and Madame Mavrodi to visit Voinești and Hornesti, the distant village where I had found Colonel Rossetti, stopping also at another village on the way, of which I do not remember the name; there several regiments are quartered in very unsatisfactory conditions of misery, sickness and want.

Everything had been arranged in perfect order, Ballif had sent my gifts on in advance. I found all the regiments formed up in a huge square and a table with my offerings in the centre. I first passed down the ranks whilst they cheered, then I gave souvenirs to the officers and told them how I wished my different provisions to be distributed.

But most of my time was spent amongst the sick, of which, alas, there were far too many. In the first village the conditions were not so bad, but at Hornesti they were heart-breaking; one miserable little doctor for hundreds of invalids scattered about in squalid cottages and most of the officers of the regiment down with typhus.

I wandered about amongst the miserable, dark little huts in which the sick were huddled together, giving them sweets and cigarettes, and brandy and tea to the most ill! I went slowly without showing any hurry, so that they should have the impression that they had me amongst them for some time. The misery of those improvised hospitals defies description. I tried to bring them as much consolation and encouragement as I could, giving each man a little cross to wear round his neck. Many grateful eyes looked up at me and I felt recompensed. But what suffering hidden away in those huts!

At one place there was a low mound at the top of which stood a wee church, and the bell was tinkling like a cracked voice. On the bank beneath the church all those who were not actually dying had been brought and laid out in the sunshine, a parade of skeletons. I passed in and out amongst them, giving *à pleines mains*; it was very hot and there were hundreds of them, and the sun was in my eyes; they all wanted me at once and kept crying for me from all corners at the same time, stretching out bony hands as though to grasp me and hold me fast.

Just as I was leaving, one of those emaciated phantoms staggered to his feet, and thanked me for "coming down from my palace towards their misery, on this Easter Sunday," then he sank back again amongst his prostrate comrades. The sun was setting and they lay about like shadows but the last rays of light seemed all to have converged upon my white dress, so as to light it up and make it shine like

a flame. I was loath to leave them, tears welled up into my eyes and I felt as I have often felt that something very strong, very real, almost holy, passed from my heart to theirs and from their hearts to mine, something as strong as Fate.

As I left the village, children and soldiers ran after me and filled my hands with great bunches of cowslips. Cowslips. . . .

I confess that finally I was really exhausted and terribly thirsty.

I am told that I take too few precautions and touch them all too much. I am aware that I am not really careful, but how show the slightest hesitation or aversion when they are suffering so cruelly? I must just trust God to allow me to pass through all this without catching the infection myself, as I begin to think that I can really be of some good to my country now, when it is so important that every ounce of courage should be kept up. But it is certainly a disagreeable thought that the bite of one single louse suffices to overthrow the strongest man; it is almost impossible to protect oneself against lice when one moves in and out amongst such wretched hovels.

The roads are dreadful, so the drive there and back was not exactly restful. As I passed through Voinești I was stopped by the French doctor, Humber, and the officers of the artillery regiment I had recently visited, waiting to greet me on the high road. I had a little talk with them. Humber told me that the mortality was decidedly diminishing. He was evidently delighted to see me again and announced that he had called the big hospital he had organized "Spital Regina Maria." He certainly is amongst those republicans who have understood that a queen can be more than a necessary evil. This makes me smile.

Jassy, Sunday, April 9th/22nd, 1917.

Had a busy afternoon in my school which I have lent as an orphan asylum. After ten, Stirbey came to talk over the agrarian question which is exciting everybody. He is preparing all the documents the King will need when tomorrow he has to face his ministers, so that he should be

able to meet their every objection. He was very busy, so we had not enough time to finish our talk, which interests me as this is a very radical reform.

At dinner we had to receive the new Russian Minister of War, Gutchkoff, a simple-looking elderly man with spectacles. This went against the grain. It was a strange feeling to sit beside this clever man who represents the new order of things, who had helped to upset those belonging to my family; I must say that I was moved by conflicting feelings, deep resentment not unmingled with curiosity; a certain latent admiration mingled with a natural repulsion of one of my class for those who overthrow.

It was a strange dinner and I was curiously excited. Bratianu and his wife, Vintila Bratianu, Barbo Stirbey and Henry Catargi were also invited. I must say that Gutchkoff was extremely pleasant to talk to.

I think if the meeting had been less public, he would have told me much more. Things being as they are, I had to feel my ground, for the situation, to say the least, was new. He said amiable things to me, amongst others that my country loved me and that he knew I worked hard for my people. I replied that I hoped it was true that my country and my people loved me, because I loved them; as to the work I was doing it was only a wee part of what I would like to do, or ought to do, but that circumstances were difficult; our poor country was much tried, and as I talked many, many pictures of suffering passed before my eyes, terrible visions of distress.

After dinner I asked him if my sister was safe; he answered that now she was, but that at first she had been in great danger. He had a profound respect for my sister.

The King had received Gutchkoff in audience before dinner, and to him Gutchkoff had spoken very freely, saying that what had been done had been inevitable, but circumstances had not moulded events as he and his colleagues had planned. They had only decided on and desired the abdication of the Tsar in favour of his son; but events ran too quickly for them, and the present situation was the outcome of what they had been able to save in the general upheaval, not what they had wished. It is thus with revolutions!

In spite of a natural feeling of repulsion I would have liked to talk much longer with Gutchkoff, but the time was too short, he was leaving by an earlier train than mine.

At half-past ten I started for Roman, lustily cheered at the station by crowds of Roumanian and Russian soldiers.

Chapter XVI

THE GHASTLINESS OF WAR

Roman, Monday, April 10th/23rd, 1917.

A BUSY day in Roman hospitals from morning till night; a real queen's day. I started off at nine and my first visit was to the big hospital which is in part run by the English Red Cross under the care of my two giant friends the Fitzwilliam brothers, who are working with a complete English unit and one or two Russian sisters. They have the whole ground floor whilst the top floor is run by our good Dr. Mărzescu.

It is a huge hospital and I spent over two hours walking about amongst my sick and wounded. The atmosphere was one of festive joy; I felt that my presence was giving great pleasure. In general, I have now the feeling that a current of warm affection is mounting towards me from the hearts of my people, something extraordinarily real and vibrating which as time goes on becomes stronger and stronger. I hope I am not deluded, but, being intensely sensitive to atmosphere, I do not think that I am.

Of course I distributed all sorts of good things amongst the sick and wounded, and gave signed postcards to all the sisters and doctors as well as to most of the orderlies. All the English were beaming, my visit was a pleasurable excitement to them, and I was, so to say, received with open arms.

Thence to a hospital arranged by Madame Averescu in several charming little, old, white-washed Roumanian houses with enormously thick walls. Here they were so proud of their good food that I was given a very delicious stew to taste made of barley and meat.

The weather was atrocious, it was cold and poured all the time. Rushed back to the train to get a little tidy and

then to lunch with Madame Nevruze Khan, the ecstatic and kindly Armenian lady, who has volunteered to lodge the two giant Fitzwilliam brothers.

This is all the more hospitable because Madame Nevruze, having lost all the members of her family whom she adored, had closed one by one all the rooms of her house, each separate chamber being dedicated to the memory of some dear departed. This was indeed touching but of course left few rooms open for daily use, and it was only her love for the Queen which induced her to break through these lugubrious traditions and open her doors to useful foreigners who had to be lodged. The result has been that this kindly recluse, who as to figure is not unlike Queen Victoria, has become a sort of mother to these two enormous Englishmen who have the faces and expressions of overgrown schoolboys. She goes about with them everywhere and has taken on the appearance of a kindly protective hen.

Madame Nevruze is the widow of a former diplomat and in her younger days had moved grandly in the higher circles of Constantinople society.

When I appeared on the scene my reception was both rhapsodic and tearful; I was given to understand that my very presence worked miracles, and that I had command over everything the kindly lady possessed; her house, her heart and even her life.

Over the chair in which I sat she had spread the last ball dress she had worn, relic of former splendour, a grey satin sprinkled with silver flowers. Her servants approached me as though I were a deity; it was no easy task to help myself from the dishes offered me, because it had been impressed upon the maids that they must under no circumstances come so close as to incur the danger of touching my royal person, with the result that they stood at such a respectful distance that I could hardly reach the food extended to me.

When anyone was to be presented, she would advance towards my chair dropping a series of curtsies, thereby somewhat disconcerting those who were to be honoured, as it became difficult to keep pace with her, and I, myself, did not find it easy to adapt my face to the circumstances.

Madame Nevruze Khan is in fact a personage not to be met with every day, and is to be treasured as unique.

Immediately after lunch I started off for more hospitals. Amongst others I visited one which was run by my own Regina Maria organization, and I ended up with the typhus hospital which was somewhat out of town. Here the men were all terribly ill and the conditions exceedingly painful, at least two men in each bed, but it was evident that every effort was being made to look after them properly. They seemed cared for in spite of a certain unavoidable misery. Here more than anywhere perhaps, my visit was welcome, and my acid sweets were received with such delight that I had to go round a second time, no small matter as there were hundreds of beds. The rain was tremendous and I had to wade over muddy courts and in consequence returned to Madame Nevruze's house in a rather dilapidated condition.

In several hospitals I came upon wounded German prisoners; they received me with "*sa traite*," learned for the occasion. I gave them the same things I gave to my own soldiers and had a talk with each, asking them where they came from, about their families, their homes, etc. They were as eager to see me as my own people were.

Tried to tidy up a bit, as my eager hostess had collected a goodly number of people to meet me for tea, especially doctors and a few of the surviving members of her own family. She fed me on an excellent sweet dish, a kind of very thin wafers piled up and spread with almonds and honey, very sticky and delicious, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I tried to be amiable all round whilst greedily stuffing myself with this sticky concoction, and then off I had to go again, this time to the military hospital, which ended my day's round at 7.30 p.m., when I returned to my train.

Whilst I was supping I remarked that an immense crowd of Russian soldiers had collected before my carriage on the station platform. It must here be mentioned that at Roman the Russian soldiers had become exceedingly revolutionary, and that I had even been advised not to come here because of hostile manifestations they had made a few days before, when they had torn down our portraits from certain public buildings declaring that there were no more kings and

queens. But I had answered that as long as I was Queen of Roumania I would go about my country as I pleased, and would not be kept at home because of a rowdy pack of Russians.

Supper over, I approached my window to look out, and saw before me a sea of faces, some scowling, some indifferent, some brutish, and others vacantly good-natured. I was smoking a cigarette and contemplating this congregation of revolutionaries when the wish suddenly came to me to try and tame these Bolsheviks. I asked Ballif how many packets of cigarettes I had to dispose of, and Ballif replied that he had a reserve of a few hundred if needed.

Leaning out of the window I offered a little packet to the man standing nearest, who turned sulkily away, so then holding up the disdained cigarettes I offered them to another who took them somewhat sheepishly. By this time several hands were raised and I threw my little packets over the heads of the others to those who were asking for them. There ensued a regular scramble towards my window, everybody suddenly alive with the desire to accept my gifts.

I stood for about a quarter of an hour at the window and by the end of that time, I had thrown cigarettes to nearly every man there. It had become a regular game this throwing and catching, and I myself was thoroughly amused. They understood that there was no condescension on my part, only a genuine wish to give pleasure, and this was infectious. Now there was not a scowling face left in all that human herd. Finally, raising both my hands, I showed that they were empty, that I had no more to give and at that a cheer rose from a thousand throats, a mighty cheer for the Queen of Roumania!

I was just preparing to go to bed when I was asked to show myself once more, and there beneath my window stood an officer chosen by his men to bring me their thanks.

Thus ended a long and somewhat tiring day, after which bed was both soft and restful.

Bacau, Tuesday, April 11th/24th, 1917.

Another more than full day, an early start, to review several companies of mountain machine-guns, which passed

before me, splashing through lakes of mud in the Bacau streets.

It was through similar lakes of mud that I had to wade all day whilst visiting endless numbers of hospitals. It never stopped pouring, but luckily I had put on high boots.

General Averescu is in command here and his wife, an admirable organizer, has done wonders in spite of very difficult conditions.

I cannot enumerate all the hospitals I inspected, I can only say that I visited miles of them, and wherever I went I distributed sweets, cigarettes, little crosses and holy pictures and sometimes my own little books, which are eagerly demanded by the soldiers. I was also taken to see a work-room which Madame Averescu had organized for the women whose husbands are at the front.

Lunched with the Averescus in the nice, very clean-looking house in which they are quartered. I confess that it was a great relief to sit down after so much wandering. Having to lean over every bed becomes finally a great fatigue for the back. They served me an excellent meal and there was much talk, especially of course on military topics.

Before starting off again, I actually had half an hour's rest during which I stretched my weary limbs quite flat upon the bed in the room they had prepared for me. All my veins throbbed and my head ached, but when the moment came for starting I was all right again. The whole afternoon was similarly employed visiting one hospital after another, returning at six o'clock to the Averescus' house for tea, to which many ladies, doctors and officers had been invited. I gathered my lost wits, so to say, in a laudable endeavour to be smiling and amiable.

General Averescu and his wife work splendidly hand in hand, she is an enormous help to him. But she remains modest, never puts herself forward and simply lives for doing good. Their house is admirably kept and they actually have none but German maids. That evening I had Averescu to supper with me in my train. We discussed war and politics and the Russian situation, we compared our hopes and fears. Averescu is always pleasant to talk

to and I have the feeling that he has a certain confidence in me. This evening also bed was a blessed relief.

Onești, Wednesday, 12th/25th April, 1917.

A day of goodwill and enthusiasm, a day which warmed my heart and gave me courage to continue my work and my manifold duties. It had rained all night, but the morning, although sunless, was clear, promising to become finer later on.

As usual I started early and motored to a place in Onești where my first Regina Maria hospital has been erected. I did not expect such a reception, had somehow imagined that I was simply to visit my hospital, but not at all; I was met with every possible honour by both Roumanian and Russian troops and endless French officers. General Grigorescu received me. Averescu had come with me from Bacau. At the station a guard of honour, and at Onești I found the troops lined up in an enormous square; everything had been touchingly decorated by the peasants of the village, who received me eagerly, throwing flowers before me wherever I went.

We began by a church service followed by a very moving speech delivered by General Grigorescu, who speaks very well and knows how to choose his words. Then innumerable French doctors and officers and also many Russian officers were presented to me; followed by all these gentlemen I visited the hospital, which is entirely run by my Regina Maria organization of which Jean Chrissoveloni is the head. He was there, but kept modestly in the background, leaving all the honours to others. I was much pleased to find everything in such perfect order. Having sent any quantity of material, there was no want of anything.

The French doctors make a business-like impression; no nonsense, only work. I gave things to all the invalids, to all the orderlies, and small, signed pictures of myself to all the doctors and officers of the different nationalities.

The atmosphere was one of general enthusiasm, a sort of irrepressible joy seemed to move all hearts.

At midday I was solemnly conducted down towards a wooden shed where a copious lunch had been spread; I

marched through rows of soldiers and peasant women. A charming spot near the Trotuş river had been selected for lunch. Formerly there must have been a wood here, but now only a few trees have remained as the Russians have cut most of them down, but it was still a very pretty place. The lunch was long, but most cheerful and cordial, and towards the end somewhat noisy, because everybody allowed his joy and enthusiasm to burst forth unrestrainedly. Of course there were many speeches, and suddenly in the middle of the meal an old French colonel stood up and recited some verses he had specially composed in my honour.

We had no end of different kinds of music, a military band, also soldier *lăutars* (gipsies), a Russian soldier chorus and a chorus of Roumanian peasant girls. The good cheer knew no end. This was the first time I had taken part in anything joyful since Mircea's death, and I found that my smiles and tears were not far apart, but I could not help being touched by the fact that my presence gave rise to so much rejoicing.

A Polish officer, a count of some kind, who even before lunch had found it difficult to curb his enthusiasm, and who had followed me about like an adoring dog all through the hospital, could no longer contain himself after lunch and overwhelmed Simky with confessions of all he felt for me. He declared he would not leave Roumania before having retaken Bucarest for the Queen, and that even if he were then in his grave he would know the moment when I returned to my capital, and though under the ground, would rejoice with us. He became lyrical and ecstatic, and finally, when I left and was saying good-bye to all the officers, the enthusiastic gentleman fell upon one knee to kiss my hand, quite regardless of the publicity of the spot, or of the mud on the ground, declaring that it had been the most sacred day of his life.

From Oneşti we motored to the end of the village where lies the lovely old convent of Caşin at the foot of the hills which is surrounded by ancient, fortress-like walls. This is very near the front.

Here I was given another most moving reception by numbers of soldiers under the orders of my old friend

Colonel Rujinski, of the cholera days. Whenever I see a regiment with flowers or green twigs in their caps, I know that it is Rujinski's regiment, because he does this in remembrance of the time we spent together in the cholera camp, when I used to decorate his soldiers with flowers.

All the soldiers stood in a long line leading up to the porch of the old convent opposite; on the other side of the path stood all the peasant women who had flocked together, and as I mounted towards the ancient building over bright coloured carpets which had been spread out before me, the women clutched at my hands to kiss them, whilst on the other side the soldiers cheered. Thus I advanced in triumphant procession till I reached the old portal. It was one of the prettiest and most touching receptions ever given me, everywhere the tender green of spring and the fruit trees in full bloom, as background hazy wooded hills, and farther off a blue line of higher mountains.

Inside the old enclosure I was received by the priests in their gaudy vestments; they led me into the church for a short *Te Deum*. My throne-like seat from which I could overlook the congregation was decorated with white cherry blossom, and the whole ground was strewn with the petals of these same flowers; everywhere I could see touching efforts to receive me fittingly, and none of these little details are ever lost on me. On stepping out of the church I noticed a newly made grave in the shadow of one of the old walls, and upon asking who was buried there, I was told that it was a very young lieutenant recently fallen in one of the last battles. I promised I would have a cross set up to his memory and I laid all the flowers I had in my arms upon the grave.

When I returned from my three days amongst the soldiers and hospitals at the front, I heard that the King had more or less been able to reconcile the Liberals and Conservatives of his government, who had been quarrelsomely disagreeing on the agrarian question raised by the King's declaration to the troops that on their return home they were to receive ground expropriated from the great estates. This meant a

tremendous reform and the Conservatives being mostly big landowners, large sacrifices would be expected of them.

The situation in Russia was getting worse, which aggravated our situation tragically, and our chief anxiety was as to how the Germans would take advantage of this state of affairs which they had, no doubt, helped to bring about.

My activities redoubled. I liked to imagine that nothing could overtax my strength, and if ever my body showed signs of being overdriven it would fill me with resentment, as I would not give up a single day. Occasionally, however, I had pains and aches which I ruthlessly decided to ignore.

Beside the activities outside my house and the many audiences I was continually giving, I was writing articles for the soldiers' newspapers as well as the book called "The Country that I Love," and in addition to all this I was diligently keeping up my diary and was, in fact, taxing my strength of resistance to the utmost, but seemed somehow to find time for everything, even time to be with my children.

Another sore complication had come into our lives: the Russian soldiers were becoming rowdy and there were continual rumours that they would try and do something against the King. Though certain of their regiments could still be controlled, most of them had set their officers aside and had taken the command into their own hands. For the moment they were more or less good-natured, but the immense number of them was a menace, and as discipline fell to pieces more and more, the situation was becoming in the highest degree dangerous. We had to be very careful not to set flame to their violence by repression, but it could hardly be expected that we should sit still and allow ourselves to be bullied by those who had once been our allies.

This was during the Kerensky Government when no one exactly knew what was going on in Russia, nor which way things were turning. There was news of Allied victories, but those were far away at the other end of Europe, whilst Russia was a close and terrifying reality; anything could happen in that great country of darkness and mystery.

Jassy, Friday, April 14th/27th, 1917.

Day of audiences, one of those days when I can never pause to sit down a moment and think. Besides, there are troubles in the house which have to be gone into, the sort of troubles which arise from the inability people have of living peacefully together.

I received a military deputation from a regiment I had visited on Easter Day when I had not been pleased at the way the men were looked after. They came to make amends.

After lunch I took a ride with Alice Cantacuzène; I rode Ardeal, who was too fresh and pulled a good deal. On the way home I was taken by a sudden fit of acute lumbago, intensely painful, so that I had to stop galloping and felt both humiliated and upset. Never has such a thing happened to me before! I cannot understand it, but for some time I have had a tendency to a pain down the left side of my leg.

All through the evening I was in great pain whenever I tried to move. This is thoroughly unwelcome, as I have a great deal to do and I cannot limp about; I need all my physical as well as my moral energy. I was quite in a state about it and Prince Stirbey who came for tea, reproved me for taking so small a thing tragically, but any physical failing seems to me *une déchéance* and a sign of coming decay!

After having finished a chapter of my new book for Jorga, went to bed in great pain.

Jassy, Saturday, April 15th/28th, 1917.

Awoke in great pain, have the greatest difficulty in moving about, my whole left side from the waist downwards stiffened by a racking pain; to get up and sit down is agony. Walking does not hurt, but I declared that if my crown fell to the ground I could not bend to pick it up to-day! Decided that it must be sciatica.

However, I got up at about ten and went to visit Rossetti and to bring him a bunch of deliciously fresh lilies of the valley. I took Ballif with me as he is Rossetti's great friend. Poor Rossetti is coming back from afar, but he is certainly recovering. He is much changed, poor fellow, but was



GENERAL BERTHELOT AND GENERAL AVERESCU.

very pleased to see me ; we talked a little but I took care not to tire him.

His family declares that indirectly he owes his recovery to me, because if I had not found him then in that far-off village it might have been too late to bring him to a hospital and to save his life.

Getting in and out of the motor is acutely painful. At half-past eleven I received Vintila Bratianu who came to discuss with me various societies and institutions. He is a tough debater.

I gave up going to Villa Greerul in the afternoon because I was suffering too much, so remained at home to do some writing. Later Jean Bratianu came to say good-bye, as he is going to Russia, this time most unwillingly. He was pessimistic and depressed.

I have news from Loe Fuller, who is going off to America, whence she hopes to send me many provisions for my hospitals. I hope she will not be blown up ! She is a wonderful friend and such an enthusiast.

Could not find a position in which I could sit with any comfort. I am exasperated, as I need all my strength ! Why must my body turn traitor at such a moment ?

Jassy, Tuesday, April 25th/May 8th, 1917.

As the Russian news was not too acutely anxious to-day, I decided to start off with Ballif and Madame Antonescu for a far-off village greatly in need of aid, although for the last ten days a good doctor has been sent there who is eagerly trying to put things in order.

With Ballif's practical aid, I sent many provisions on ahead so as not to arrive with empty hands.

Part of the road was very beautiful through a lovely forest in its first tenderest green, but it was more bumpy than anything that can be described ; the weather, however, was delicious, neither warm nor cold, with blue sky and sunshine. We lunched somewhere in the wood on the way, then on again till we reached the village I was to inspect. Where indeed I found completest misery—they had absolutely nothing ! A hospital had been fitted up in a sort of school which was of all things also a theatre ! And to add to

the ghastliness the dying had been bedded on the stage. They had no linen, so the soldiers lay in their uniforms ; it was an awful sight. I walked about amongst them giving as much consolation as I could, but many, alas, were far beyond consolation. I also visited the convalescents sitting out in the sun, who much appreciated my cigarettes and sweets.

Luckily I had brought an enormous quantity of things beginning with linen and ending with every possible sort of food from butter and cheese to sugar, tea, and rum, as well as all kinds of dried vegetables for *bortch*, dried fish, bacon, etc. ; all these provisions I ordered from Russia, having with much difficulty arranged for regular supplies.

I left these treasures in charge of the doctor and begged him to deal them out according to necessity, also amongst the sick in the village who have been infected by this dread disease.

I visited a family, husband and wife both down with typhus, lying together with their children in one bed, the house being about the size of a cupboard. I tried to talk to them and tell them that they would be helped, but they were too dazed by fever to be able to understand. The two little children although huddled up against them had not been infected. Curiously enough it seems children seldom catch this form of typhus.

From this village I went on to Țibanești, Peter Carp's place, where Nando used in former days to go shooting in winter. Here also I visited the sick, some in very low tents which made moving about amongst them very difficult, as I had to bend double and at the same time distribute the things I had brought with me.

Dear little Madame Antonescu fearlessly crawled about with me everywhere, and was a real aid to me. She is a sweet, good little woman and an excellent companion in spite of her modest timidity. I am deeply attached to her.

We also went into Carp's house ; there were actually Russians lodging there, *quelle ironie* ! Carp always detested the Russians ! I went to poor Peter junior's grave ; he was their second son and was killed in my regiment even before the loss of Bucarest. I believe he was his mother's

favourite, and now she is cut off from his grave as I am from Mircea's. In her name I laid a bunch of flowers on his tomb.

Ballif proposed to drive us home by another road, saying it was just as good, and if anything shorter. Well the road must have changed since those good old days, for it was extraordinarily bad. We took three hours to get back and we were bumped mercilessly from beginning to end. Once we remained stuck in a boggy part of the village, where in spite of the dry weather the mud was knee deep, and it took ten oxen to drag us out.

During this stoppage we drank a cup of tea and I divided cake, sugar and cigarettes amongst the peasants, I also gave little crosses to the children which seemed to delight them. I always have my hands full in these days; it is the only pleasure I have, to give and give and give.

One delightful old cart-driver, dishevelled, grey and picturesque, who was watching the scene, told me he had met me once and had seen from a great way off how I was distributing sugar amongst the soldiers; he seemed delighted to meet me again at closer quarters. He was smiling, energetic and friendly and gladly accepted cigarettes, sugar and a cross to wear round his neck.

We came home at seven o'clock satisfied with our day, but having been nearly bumped to pieces.

Jassy, Friday, April 28th/May 11th, 1917.

Nando received a deputation of the Jews and made a declaration to them promising that they too would be given rights after the war, and that all those who gave their blood for the country, whether Christian or Jewish, would be treated alike.

A delightful old French lady came to see me, a Madame Bonné, a military *infirmière*, who had faithfully worked in the *triage* where she had caught typhus, but has now recovered and is leaving for France. I decorated her with the Regina Maria Red Cross order, whilst with great volubility she related to me her many adventures.

She is quite a type, resembling somewhat the vivandières of former days. She salutes in military fashion and is afraid

of nothing. She has already nearly three years' campaign behind her, was taken prisoner by the Germans at Villeroi quite at the beginning of the War, but managed to escape: went to Serbia, made all the Serbian retreat over the mountains into Albania in winter-time on horseback, having lost all she possessed. She had had eleven children, the first year beginning with three, the next year with two. She only managed to bring up three, and now she is divorced. She is mobilized for the duration of the War and for six months afterwards. Her energy is uncrushable, even death spared her, for she recovered from that ghastly illness which carries off so many.

Robert de Flers came to see me at eleven o'clock and described to me his *tournée* on the front with Carol. He has come back delighted, bringing me many messages from the enthusiastic French colonel who writes verses in my honour. Flers declares that this enthusiast considers that a ten years' war would not seem long if he could during that time be in my service. Flers of course related this in the most comic way.

It was announced to me to-day that England was sending me five thousand pounds for my good works. This is indeed splendid news.

Jassy, Sunday, April 30th/May 13th, 1917.

At last a long letter from Ducky was brought me, a tragic letter, a heart-breaking, soul-torturing letter, a letter full of blackest despair, and deepest, most hopeless agony. I had always feared it would be thus with her and yet hoped against hope that it would not be. A dreadful letter of inconsolable grief, cruel and fearful in its desperate intensity.

She could not but suffer thus, because what is left? As she says:

"Neither pride, nor hope, nor money, nor future, and the dear past blotted out by the frightful present; nothing is left, nothing!"

And I cannot go to her! I can be of no good, no aid, no relief. How can I, a queen, go now to Russia or send anyone of mine there?

Poor, proud, great Ducky; why had her life to be as

tragic as her face? But perhaps this is not yet the end! Can one know what may still happen?

And into the bargain she is going to have a baby, and she has no layette for it. By some extraordinary chance I have Mircea's layette here with me; I must find means of sending it to her.

It was Marshal who brought me Ducky's letter. I begged him to try and see her if he could. He has been deeply impressed and upset by finding this proud, brave woman in such a cruel situation. He spoke with concentrated indignation about the happenings in Russia. It is very difficult for anybody to go to see Ducky or any member of the Imperial Family, but she writes that both Bratianu and Diamandi behaved beautifully towards them.

Every free hour I can dispose of is used for writing my book, "The Country that I Love."

Jassy, Tuesday, May 9th/22nd, 1917.

Had a quiet morning and for once time to write in peace. Am writing a series of articles for Jorga's paper, describing parts of our country now under the enemy's sway, which will later be collected to make a book. I had no idea that people would be so touched because I described their country with such love; it seems to go to their hearts. For the moment my articles are in great favour, so why not give pleasure whilst I can, but it is the last thing I would ever have imagined, that I should one day, *en temps de guerre*, write articles in Jorga's paper that the world at large would sanction! I, who never used to write, who really had a very small opinion of my intellectual capacities! Well, well, much that is unexpected happens to-day.

Unexpected also that I should daily send white bread to Professor Jorga, with whose digestion brown bread disagrees. For the moment I am in high favour with the great man. We shall see how long it lasts!

Directly after lunch Carol and I, followed by our military companions, drove to the far-off village of Voinești, where the little French doctor Humber is doing such good work. He is an enthusiast and my last visit there had fired him with the desire to do everything he possibly could for my

soldiers. His hospital has been fitted up in a large barn and everything is being done with the greatest care and forethought. This is entirely a typhus hospital, and what touched me was that even the sickliest men turned round to tell me how wonderfully the doctor was looking after them. The joy to have me amongst them was very evident. My name has been given to this hospital and my portrait has been hung in a conspicuous position, decorated with flowers like an icon, and the name of Regina Maria was printed even on the papers above the men's beds. Regina Maria! Regina Maria!

I met my own name wherever I looked.

I have got into the habit of going very slowly through the wards, so that the sick should not have a hurried impression of my visit. Strange, but all, even those who are delirious, always call me by my name, as though instinctively recognizing me; this always fills me with touched astonishment and wonder.

The doctors have often tried to induce me to wear india-rubber gloves when I go about amongst typhus cases, but I refuse to do this as the soldiers all kiss my hand, and I really cannot ask them to kiss india-rubber!

Came home late after having done my duty thoroughly, which to-day was not without virtue because I had a bad headache and the bumpy roads were agony. I left provisions for the hospital and small souvenirs for the doctors and officers.

I tried to rest my poor head, but it cannot rest, it has too much to worry and think about.

After dinner I actually played a game of cards with the children.

Chapter XVII

SPRINGTIME HOPES AND SUMMER FEARS

Jassy, Wednesday, 10th/23rd May, 1917.

THE Tenth of May—our National Day. How many memories it brings back to my mind : the many years of my youth, when year after year I prepared my smartest clothes for that occasion, so as to appear to my greatest advantage before our people.

I remember old Uncle and Auntie and all my children at different ages in their festive clothes, and full of excitement ; even when they were quite small I used to take them on that day to the parade, it was a day of glory for their nurses, old Green and Woodfield. Only little Mircea never went because, it must be confessed, he was of uncertain temper and I could not count upon his behaviour ; little Mircea was a naughty boy ! The naughty boy is naughty no more, he lies still and silent in his grave over there beyond the line of fire, and to-day he doesn't know that it is the Tenth of May.

What may our poor Bucarest be doing to-day ? What may its thoughts be, its hopes, its despairs. Who of us will return there, and if we return what shall we find ?

Here our Tenth of May was a touching day full of deep emotions. At ten we drove out to the aviation field where there was first a church service. We stood in the middle of the field surrounded by all the troops, then Nando decorated many officers and also some flags. This was followed by a march past, after which the soldiers danced national dances.

These ceremonies were made exceedingly moving by the thought that most of these men had been under fire and that they were the remnants of an army which at the outset had been double the size. These were those who had

been able to live through the incredible hardships, want and misery of this winter, and added to these very young recruits of this year. What we had before us represented a tremendous effort towards the rebuilding of a new army under fantastically difficult circumstances. Moving especially, when one thinks of the thousands and thousands who lie under the ground, mowed down by fire, sickness and want.

The past winter rises up before my mind like a nightmare almost beyond human conception. May God preserve us from having to live through another such winter.

Before we left the field the troops gave us a tremendous ovation. The King and I stood up in our motor, so that all the men could see us; they came rushing towards us in thousands, throwing their caps into the air, or, sticking them on the ends of their bayonets, they waved their guns over their heads; a mighty breath of enthusiasm swept over them.

We had stood for over three hours, but the weather was heavenly, sunny, blue sky, and all the same fresh. Only when I came home I discovered that I had burnt my neck, so completely that it was covered with large white blisters; the same thing happened to Mignon—we hadn't realized that the sun was so strong.

After lunch a performance at the theatre with colossal enthusiasm and demonstrations of devotion. The house was full of soldiers and officers, and at the end they all sang the national anthem in chorus.

We are happy and touched to see the immense popularity Nando has to-day attained, in spite of the ill-success of the War. He is now loved and appreciated by his people. They have at last understood how honest, unselfish and loyal he is. The way he has uncomplainingly shared all their misfortunes, has made him dear to their hearts. I was popular even before the War, so the difference was not so marked, but in his case their attitude has undergone a veritable transformation.

My good Ballif was still too ill to be with us this morning. I paid him a surprise visit. He is still in great pain, but is sitting up. Ballif is a strange fellow, he would never let me come to see him whilst he was laid up, declaring

that a queen cannot visit one of her servants, that if I desired to see him he would have himself carried up and stood up against the wall because he could only receive me standing. Not many to-day have ideas of this sort.

With spring came a feeling of renewal. The winter had added horror to our many disasters. The warm sunshine was like a miracle, and beneficent to all convalescents. I kept on visiting our convalescent-camps and could verify how little by little those yellow-skinned, skeleton-like beings were crawling back to life. I used sometimes to sit with them on the steps of their wooden barracks, letting the sun drench us, and I would talk to them about our hopes.

I was welcome everywhere, and my coming and going amongst the suffering in every place had become quite natural. I never had to ask who they were, soldiers or civilians; they were my people and they had looked death in the eye and I was their "mother," a vague but all-embracing title which needed no introduction.

Colonel Thomson came to take leave of us. He had been made General and was called home. We lost in Thomson a good friend. He had understood our suffering and thinks we have not been very fairly treated. Thomson has a very individual and quaint way of seeing things and is also quaint in the way he puts his thoughts into words. I felt that Roumania would always have a defender in Thomson. He regretted having to leave us at a moment when we are facing the terrible Russian danger. Also from Salonica the news was far from reassuring. Danger whichever way we turned.

Jassy, Monday, May 15th/28th, 1917.

Nicky and I spent the afternoon teaching the convalescents in my little rest-home how to play Halma, draughts and other games which have been sent to me from England for the soldiers. Nicky took care of one group and I of the other.

In the evening there was a dinner in the King's house for Albert Thomas, quite a big dinner with all the ministers of the Entente and a few of our local ministers.

The Roumanians love France, and the moment a Frenchman appears on the scene they all "go off their heads" and their natural sympathy bursts through their reserve. Most receptions are more or less arranged affairs, the enthusiasm not really spontaneous, curiosity having much to do with it, but a Frenchman calls forth an outburst of joy and excitement which comes irresistibly from their hearts.

Albert Thomas was a great success. He is a funny, round little man with shaggy hair and spectacles, and is possessor of a tan-coloured beard ending in two impossible curls. I do not know what he has done with his teeth, but he only seems to have one in front and when he talks he sticks out his under lip like a child when it pouts. And, my goodness, he *can* talk!

Everybody was of course in evening clothes, but he had remained in his shabby little jacket and was a delightfully incongruous guest for the King's table. He sat beside me and I must say that we had an excellent time of it. He was not only interesting but also amusing, and the flow of his speech was like a gushing stream. He can hold forth on any subject, putting even the most insignificant story into just the right words to make it irresistible.

Everybody round our table was amused, interested, even somewhat excited. This red-faced, shaggy-haired, little individual represents the man of to-day and perhaps of to-morrow; he is an *homme du peuple*, whose intelligence alone has placed him where he is. At this crisis in our lives, he may be of great help to our country. He seems well disposed enough and got on with us as though he had always known us. He made especially great friends with Carol and declared he wanted to carry him off with him to France so as to show him everything and then send him back with heavy batteries and a squadron of the latest style of aeroplanes. Carol, who, ever since he was a child cared for everything French, was keen on accepting the offer.

It was an amusing and interesting evening and I enjoyed studying the different faces round our table. Decidedly there was excitement in the air and a vague wave of hope.

Albert Thomas is living with the Metropolitan, and amusingly described his reception by the bearded Father of

the Church ending with a kiss on the mouth. Thomas has an irresistible laugh which bursts forth with complete *sans gêne*; he seems to enjoy his own eloquence as a woman enjoys her beauty.

Went to bed not feeling very well—I have a gnawing neuralgic pain in my left arm, very irritating and not to be ignored.

Jassy, May 17th/30th, 1917.

This morning I received Claude Anet, who is going about with Thomas. Many years ago he travelled to Persia with Simky and Marthe, going by motor through almost pathless lands. He was most pleasant to talk to and all he had to relate about Russia was most interesting, as he has been there for several years, and like most Frenchmen talks well and fluently.

Late in the afternoon I took Irène Procopiu with me to visit two villages, where two regiments had been quartered during the winter. They were cut off from all communication and when the typhus was at its height the death toll was enormous. I had been asked to come and see the churchyard where all the soldiers had been buried, as they told me that it was a very pretty place. It certainly was very pretty, the churchyard situated on a hill behind an old convent. Shaded by large walnut trees, it was one mass of flowers. The air was full of the perfume of acacias, which are now in full bloom.

The old priest of the place showed me round; he was glad to see me and eager to talk about all the sadness he had witnessed. He was full of apologies because the crosses on the graves were not in tidy rows, but he explained that the winter had been so rigorous, the ground frozen so hard, that it was difficult to dig graves.

"You see," he said, "so many died, and those who had recovered were so weak that very often the dead lay in rows before we could bury them. Luckily it was very cold. I was always there to read prayers, but it did make me very sad to see so many quite young men die. But also the doctors were sick," he added, "and there was no one left to look after the invalids; besides, there were so many packed

together in the peasants' huts, and after all the peasants had also to live somewhere."

The old man spoke quite simply without accentuating his words; he too was a peasant and had something of the peasant's stoicism about him and his eyes had a way of not seeming to see the things they were looking at.

There was an enormous lime tree in full flower just beside the old church, around which a thousand bees buzzed. It was intensely hot, but inside the church it was very cool and there was a beautifully carved tombstone on the grave of some ancient Boyar. I was specially struck by the perfection of the design, which reminded me of Persian designs, flowers rising like a fountain out of a long-necked vase. Finally bidding farewell to the old priest, we drove off to visit another far-away village, where several officers, friends of Irene, were quartered with their regiments.

They took us to a lovely spot under an enormous walnut tree, whence there was a wide-sweeping view and where they had dug themselves a trench-table.

Young Ferikidy was amongst the officers and with his usual taste had charmingly decorated the table with peasant pots full of yellow bog irises and wild roses. They actually offered me a good cup of tea, and of all things, ginger biscuits, a luxury I had not tasted for ages. It was restful and pleasant there under the big tree, but I had to hurry off as I was expected back to dinner.

The impression I carried away from this little tea-party beneath the nut tree was very pleasant. It was so far away from all the turmoil of the town, and to-day there is in all things an atmosphere of rising hope. The drive home was also very pretty, and the sun was sinking, a red ball over a vast expanse of swamp, low, shadowy hills in the distance.

Hurried home as quickly as possible, which is difficult on these bumpy roads, but I had to be punctual as we are expecting Albert Thomas for supper.

Nando has returned very cheerful from his troops, and is pleased with all he saw; certainly the general depression is much less great.

Our supper was really most amusing. Thomas sat be-

side me again and on the other side I had one of the officers of his suite. He was most entertaining and after the meal was over we all settled down round a table with this witty, fat little man in our midst, who behaved as though he belonged to the family, so that the children were inclined to call him Uncle Thomas. We would never have believed a short while ago that we should sit thus round one table with Albert Thomas, Socialist, French Minister of National Defence.

I think we made a friend of him, and I think also that he understood the great effort our poor invaded country was making in the face of so many odds. Albert Thomas felt so comfortable in our family circle that it was with great difficulty he was coaxed to his train, which had to start at a fixed hour.

Jassy, Friday, May 19th/June 1st, 1917.

To-day I received a killing, fat, little man who does not wish to be considered a Jew, who brought me the gift of five thousand francs, and has promised me a thousand eggs on Sunday for my hospitals.

After lunch I started off with Mignon, Stirbey and Major Georgescu for Dobrovăţ, one of the Crown Estates. The road there goes through beautiful forests, but it is long and almost intolerably bad. Stirbey, who is head of the Crown Domains, had to go there for inspection, and I went to visit the soldiers and hospitals.

When we arrived the regiment I came to inspect was exercising in the woods. They were called together by trumpet and all came running through the trees towards me. It was a pretty sight. When they had all united and had been formed into a giant square, Mignon and I advanced towards them from the opposite direction and were received by the National Anthem sung by all the troops in chorus. It was so moving that it made our hearts beat with emotion.

The colonel commanding this regiment has a very good record, and has been decorated with the *Mihai Viteazul* (our highest war-decoration).

I begged him to tell his men that I knew of their past sufferings (the regiment had suffered fearfully during the

winter, and many had died), that I had come to see for myself if they were well again, that I had always thought of them, but had been unable to reach them because of the snow; I wished them to know that I was grateful to them for their courage and abnegation. The colonel faithfully repeated my words in a loud voice, upon which I was tremendously cheered. The soldiers threw their caps into the air, catching them on their bayonets, which is their way of demonstrating very great enthusiasm. When I moved away the whole regiment moved after me still cheering for all they were worth, whilst their music played. All this in a very beautiful hilly and wooded landscape; it was quite one of the prettiest and most spontaneous military receptions I ever received.

Of course I visited the hospital also; it is well arranged and clean but happily half-empty. As I came out of the hospital it began to rain, and rained heavily for ten minutes, washing the dust off everything. It was a tremendous relief as the dust had been insufferably stifling all the way out.

We had for once a quite delicious drive on a road made by the Crown Domains. Alas, it was but a short bit, but after the rain it was perfectly lovely, the washed trees filling my eye with deepest satisfaction. We meant to take another way home but we made a mistake and landed again upon the bumpy road, which was a trial. We stopped, however, to sup on the way in a lovely part of the forest. It rained from time to time and had actually become almost chilly. We were back about 10 p.m.

Certainly all that part of the country is lovely and the forests still almost virgin; but do not speak to me of the roads!

This was a quieter period and although the Russian news was distracting, we were not in such constant distress. The warm season lessened our misery, and we seemed to be a little less oppressed.

My different organizations for helping every kind of distress began to give excellent results. Mamulea was certainly a good choice and showed himself quietly efficient. He was a very stolid personage, his feelings never ran away

with him, but being circumspect he considered me over-generous.

I also began helping the poor Jewish population ; Jassy has swarms of poor Jews. I had laid in great stores of provisions, and Mamulea dealt them out most systematically, at the same time stemming my too impulsive altruism.

My diary is full of all these different charities which filled my days. It makes rather dull reading, so I only copy out a page here and there. Every single day I went either to one hospital or another, and I took a special interest in the one for the tuberculous, the most desperately sad of all. Here my visits were very frequent, and whenever I could lay hands upon extra provisions I would come to this saddest of places and deal them out myself.

There was a room for hopeless cases. They used to await me with heart-breaking eagerness. I could do nothing for them except, by my presence amongst them, give them a feeling that they were not entirely abandoned. I had got accustomed to these sights of abject misery, but my heart never became indifferent, and all my energy was concentrated in one continual effort to help.

News came that the Russians on the front had begun to fight again, we were even told that they had a "success" somewhere. But it was all very vague and uncertain.

The weather was getting very hot. Jassy was full of dust and I decided to send Ileana for a time to the country, accepting the kind invitation of old Prince Ghyca Deleni. I also sent Mignon to Sybil's hospital at Ghidigeni, where she was exceedingly happy and did excellent work.

The King had no end of worry trying to form a solid coalition government, in which he was faithfully aided by Prince Stirbey. Many of the discussions and debates took place in my room and we sighed over the quarrelsomeness of politicians. They are the sore trial of kings !

Jassy, June 8th/21st, 1917.

An emotional morning. Parade and swearing in of Transylvanian troops that had been prisoners in Russia (taken from the Austrians), and who have now been liberated and allowed to come to fight for us.

It was a fine and moving ceremony, which stirred our hearts and made tears come to our eyes. They were a fine-looking lot of men, well dressed and full of enthusiasm.

As usual we first walked down their ranks, then followed a church service during which the oath was taken, then altogether they sang the National Anthem and other patriotic songs, after which they marched past the King to the cheering of the crowd.

The weather was glorious but immensely hot. The King remained to lunch with the troops on the plateau in the broiling sun; when he came back he described how they had suffered from the heat.

At a quarter-past six all the Transylvanian troops marched past my house, to make patriotic ovations. I ran out to the front of my garden, standing up in a motor to receive their cheers and manifestations of goodwill. There was an atmosphere of tremendous excitement and emotion; the sight of these "Ardeleni" means so much to us, part of the great dream for which we are fighting!

Many of our people were walking with them and I recognized several friends, who cheered me with all their might. Flowers were thrown to me as they passed and I also threw flowers to the soldiers. Then they moved away up the hill.

Hurriedly dressed for a ride, taking Mignon with me; I was riding Ardeal, the ground was perfect, the sky very black and stormy, so black, in fact, that our riding was considered a folly, but we got no rain, only delicious freshness. At times we rode through knee-high grass full of wild flowers of every colour. Everything was refreshed, succulent and green after the recent rain; we simply loved our ride.

Jassy, June 14th/27th, 1917.

As usual my morning was taken up by hospitals. There are distressing numbers of consumptives; I am doing what I can for them, am trying to feed them up, especially those who can still be saved, but I spent much time amongst the hopeless cases as they are so desperately miserable. That consumptive hospital is the saddest of all my hospitals.

Yesterday received bad news about Dr. Campbell, who



CAROL AND ILEANA.

was working with Dr. Armstrong in Maruka's hospital. It seems he has caught an infection in one of his fingers, and they are very anxious about him; Miss Milne who is working with him was terribly upset. On my way home I passed the hospital to inquire how he was, only to receive the sad news that he had just died! A quite young man, only thirty, who had gone through the Serbian typhus campaign, who fought the typhus with us here and in Russia, and now dies of a poisoned finger! Such is Fate!

Jassy, June 15th/28th (Thursday), 1917.

Went this morning with Mignon to bring a decoration the King had given me for poor Campbell; I pinned it myself upon his breast. He was covered with flowers, but they had put a cloth over his handsome face. This was necessary, his great friend Armstrong told me with unutterable grief, because he was so terribly changed. Of course I did not ask them to uncover him; in the hospital they had all been so proud of his handsome face, it was better to remember him as he had been in life. All those who worked with him had loved him dearly.

For lunch I had no one and started off immediately afterwards for Ruginoasa and Paşcani. It was hot but not unbearably so. The road had miraculously improved, there were wild flowers everywhere, in some places in such quantities that the fields and roadsides were a carpet of colour, great stretches of blue, mauve and yellow.

We reached Ruginoasa in about an hour and a half, and wandered through the hospital and endless tents which were studded about the fine park. The house used to be Cuza's country place and is hideous false Gothic, painted light grey, but the rooms have good proportions and were very cool. It was very fatiguing and hot, though, crawling about in all the tents.

Young Dr. Leonté is at the head of this hospital which belongs to the Red Cross, and seems to be working very efficiently.

Before leaving we visited the church where Cuza is buried. Both Elisabetta and Mignon were with me and also Colonel Ballif, at last quite well again and in good spirits.

When Ballif is in good spirits he is up to anything, full of fun and ready to go in for any of my sudden impulses.

Hurrying away from Ruginoasa we sped along the road towards Pașcani, where I wanted to hunt out a certain little French Doctor Ferreyrolles, who has been bravely fighting the typhus in this far-off place, through a thousand difficulties and with no one to second him.

Pașcani is very prettily situated, and at a certain point overlooking the town, Princess Marie Muruzi has a lovely old Roumanian house with a loggia of carved stone rather like Mogosoia.

We did not find Ferreyrolles at his hospital but we were told that he was at Brătești, a charming little old convent near by which he is transforming into a home for convalescents. There we found him very astonished and delighted to see us, the more so when we explained that we had come all the way to see him. He has been so little helped and encouraged that this seemed almost impossibly good news, especially when I told him I wanted to send provisions or any help he needed. Brătești is really a lovely little place amidst woods and orchards, quite the sort of place I would love to live in. There were a few refugee women there, who were full of delight to see us, and carried us off to a charming spot amongst fir trees where there was a little spring of fresh water, whilst the invalids dispersed amongst the fields to gather large bunches of huge bluebells.

I must say that this place would tempt me much more as a summer retreat than all the fine houses that have been suggested to me. It is the sort of place which has irresistible rustic charm, and I never can resist an orchard; a month's rest in this place would be ideal, but of course this will not be possible.

We dared not tarry as we had still all the hospitals to visit. Kindly Ferreyrolles asked us, on the way to his hospital, to stop at a smaller hospital run by some Russian women, who had been very helpful to him during the terrible winter. Here we found half a dozen genial, friendly women, who were very glad to see us and with whom we could get on partly in French, partly in German. I distributed some of my gifts amongst them and their invalids.

Accompanied by their blessings and by all the flowers they could tear up out of their meagre garden, we drove off to Ferreyrolles' several hospitals grouped round the station.

It was already late and the sky, which had been quite clear, was taking on curious leaden colours, promising a storm of some kind.

Nothing daunted, however, we set about visiting the different buildings which represented much hard labour on the part of our good little doctor. The sky was doing incredible things, becoming blacker and blacker; the whole horizon was streaked with great flashes of lightning, but at the same time there was a lurid light, so strong that it literally turned everything it shone on into flaming gold, the strangest, most unusual light effect I have ever seen. Whilst I was moving about in the almost dark wards, outside this extraordinary radiance lay on all things, but only on one side of them, the other was already almost inky black. Lifting my head to look out of the window, I found the wall of the house opposite a miraculous golden flame; I have never seen anything like it!

Ignoring the oncoming storm which was gathering from all sides like an invading army, I quietly continued going from hospital to hospital, my daughters in my wake. We actually reached the last hospital, which was so dark inside that I moved from bed to bed with someone holding a lamp behind me. The whole proceeding was strange and weird. Then at last down came the rain, in buckets, in torrents, in rivers and with it the night.

We got drenched before we could reach our motors, and thereupon decided to go and take our supper at the mayor's house, where the doctor was living, instead of taking it somewhere outside as we had intended.

To our surprise we found a neat, clean little house, almost in good taste, a pleasant little hall with a table laid for supper and a pretty staircase leading up to a second story, and of all amazing things, here we were received by an Englishwoman! The mayor was harbouring the refugee wife of a military doctor, whose small girl had an English nurse.

We were led to a nice comfortable room where we were given water for washing and all we needed for tidying up. At the farther end of the room in a white cot lay a charming little girl about three or four years old. She sat up and stared at us, and when told that I was the Queen, her eyes became very round, it must have all appeared to her like some sort of dream. But so that she should ever after realize that I had really been there I gave her a little jewelled bonbonnière I generally carried about with me in my bag.

Comfortably refreshed, we went down to dinner with the doctor and the refugee lady, the mayor being absent, they lending us their table, we providing the food. My colonel was in high spirits, so it was a most genial meal and we asked the faithful Ferreyrolles to tell us exactly what he needed, and Ballif took note of each thing on a piece of paper, promising that everything would be sent in the shortest possible time.

Just before we departed the mayor appeared; he is, it seems, the only philanthropist of the place, is well off and has helped the doctor as much as possible.

At a late hour we started for home; it was still raining, the roads had become very slippery, and going was difficult. Once we got with two wheels into a ditch and had no end of trouble in getting out again, reaching Jassy finally after midnight.

Now came a time of comparative quiet when the hospitals were emptier, and my different organizations, being well established, were doing steady useful work, so I could ease down a little; and although we could not go to the country for a rest, as we had nowhere to go to, I drove about a great deal exploring the country around and occasionally visiting the regiments quartered in distant villages.

Everywhere was a feeling of rebirth. The skeleton soldiers began to look like human beings again and each regiment cultivated large stretches of vegetables so as to have provision for next winter. Everywhere teeming activity and in spite of the Russian anxiety on one side and the Ger-

Grui Sânger
1908 - 1918



MY FAVOURITE THOROUGHBRED, GRUI SÂNGER.

mans on the other, there was undeniably a strange feeling of hope in the air.

A born optimist, I was soon saturated with this feeling, based though it was upon frail expectations, but the human heart is incredibly elastic and I thank God that this happier period was given to us during which we could absorb new strength.

I began to love the country round Jassy. It had a charm of its own. I discovered enchanting little villages and rejoiced over the hollyhocks the peasants planted in their tiny gardens. Sometimes these gorgeous flowers were higher than the wee thatched huts. There were also huge fields of sunflowers the seeds of which were used for oil. I loved these golden-flowered stretches which of an evening exhaled a pleasant, aromatic odour; they were a glorious sight.

Carol had a rapid, smooth-running Rolls-Royce in which he occasionally drove me towards sunset, and I have a dreamy remembrance of never-ending roads leading to forsaken villages where I stopped to give sugar and other provisions to the women and children who ran out to greet us.

The valleys of the Jijia and of the Pruth, and beyond lay Bessarabia, and behind Bessarabia Russia with all its fearful possibilities and threats; it was a strange feeling to be so near.

I also took long rides and rejoiced over the cornfields in their ripening abundance. There was one distant point I often went to, a hillock overlooking great distances, and from here I would gaze into space with a queer feeling that I was overlooking the world. But beneath this outward peace seethed a dull anxiety about what was still to come.

I had a favourite horse called Grui Sânger, a dark brown thoroughbred which Marghiloman had once given me. This beautiful creature was more than a horse, he was a friend, and during these evening rides it was as though my own uneasiness ran also through *his* veins. A noble creature which I rode for twelve years and who was perhaps the horse I have, during my lifetime, most loved.

But although I think of them gratefully, those few weeks of peace were not to last; the Russian threat was advanc-

ing towards us, becoming greater and greater, and on the other side we were preparing to meet a new German onslaught, and upon this new effort depended our last hope, and our military resistance was being feverishly prepared.

And thus began the battle of Mărășești, but although I was behind the front with the hospitals, I did not at the time exactly realize the importance of this battle which has remained celebrated in the annals of our war. This will be seen by the notes in my diary.

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Chapter XVIII

THE RUSSIAN DEBACLE

Jassy, July 11th/24th, 1917.

FOR several days we have foreseen military events of great importance both here and in Russia, and a feeling of excited anxiety has been with me all the time. Alas, I am more anxious than hopeful, I am no longer accustomed to good luck. To-day was an uncomfortable day, continually expecting news. Reports from the Russian front are anything but good, whilst our offensive began to-day and we are, alas, not at all sure of the Russians. Some consider our offensive a dangerous folly; I confess to be one of these, but I always hope that there may be some lucky military combination that I do not understand which made this offensive not only necessary but advantageous. But I am mortally anxious and all day long conflicting news was brought to me, which was most upsetting. Curiously enough, Nando is not as anxious as I am. Carol left last night for the front and Nando leaves this evening.

He did not appear for lunch as he had a headache; this gave me a dreadful fright. I thought that it was perhaps an indisposition caused by bad news, but no, it was a natural headache, and when I dashed over to his house to see him, I found that he was not half so worried as I was. Ballif is also pessimistic and he is generally right about most things, so this does not help to reassure me.

So as to calm my nerves I went out for one of our absurd drives with Nicky in "Bambino"; I was moved by the spirit of adventure and induced my youthful chauffeur to take risks upon impossible roads upon which other motors could not go.

Nando's headache was better and he came to dinner. He refuses to share my apprehensions.

Jassy, Wednesday, July 12th/25th, 1917.

Spent a long morning at Frumoasa, the eye hospital, which in early winter was such a terrible place, when Ducky and I had gone on a visit of inspection. Now it is scarcely recognizable. Dr. Staicovitch showed me around with great pride, delighted with the improvements, to which I had somewhat contributed. They have even planted quantities of vegetables in every available place, sufficiently to have provisions for the winter, a question I always anxiously inquire into, as my Roumanians are not particularly good at saving up things for the morrow.

Little Catherine Stirbey who was with me is very keen to be useful, so I often take her about with me when I have no children of my own at my disposal.

Military news was good on the whole, except from Russia where in one place the Germans continue to advance and the Russians to retreat. Our offensive seems to be successful; cannons and prisoners have been taken, but for some reason my heart is as heavy as lead.

After lunch I went off with Elisabetta and Nicky to visit General Angelescu's division at Grajduri. He has done a lot of good work and put things into excellent order. We went from regiment to regiment and were pleased to find that everywhere efforts had been made towards tidiness, comfort and usefulness. Here, too, were many vegetable gardens and even systematic baths and bakeries. The general has also repaired the roads in his part of the world, but before we reached this blessed region they were inconceivably abominable. Returned home about 10 p.m. much bumped but satisfied with what we had seen.

Jassy, Thursday, July 13th/26th, 1917.

Day of growing anxiety. Nando appeared unexpectedly for breakfast, called back from the front by Head-quarters, who have stopped our offensive, as something terrible seems to be going on in Russia. It appears that they are giving way all along the front before an enemy only a quarter their number; they simply retreat in masses without fighting.

For us this is terrible news, disastrous news, and it has

come so suddenly that I am quite dazed. I still cling to hope, for such is my way, but I am afraid that this time it may really mean the end of everything. In fact, for us the disaster is such that there are no words with which it can be expressed.

I went about my own affairs as usual, as though nothing had happened, but with *une angoisse au cœur* which grew from hour to hour.

It was a lovely day, cool and sunny, wherever I looked signs of improvement, a little recompense for all the hard and laborious work. Everything so fertile, vegetables planted everywhere, the harvest nearly ripe, the hay splendid, and seeing it all my heart ached and ached.

The Coandas and General Barter came for lunch ; I must say I like General Barter, he is so encouraging, amusing and cheerful, one cannot help feeling hopeful when he is there, yet I know that disaster stares us in the face.

The Germans are nearing Cernovitz, which is quite near us, and if the Russians do not hold what is to happen to our troops which are beyond our frontiers, according to the plan made with our troublesome Ally ?

Misfortune pursues us ; if the Russians will not fight we can be invaded in a few days, and Mignon and Ileana are still at Ghidigeni !

Fear is gradually invading me ; I am slow in accepting fear, but I feel that events are so tragic that all our courage and energy are of no avail. The Russians cut our throats.

Carol suddenly reappeared, but although he had been to Ghidigeni he said nothing to the children, nor did he make any arrangement about bringing them back, so I hurriedly sent a railway carriage for them but had no time to write a letter.

After dinner alone in my room, I had a fit of despair. I asked if Ballif was in the house, but he was not ; I had so many things to think about, to settle, that I felt at my wits' end. Unable to stand my state of mind, although it was already 11 p.m., I sent for Stirbey and with him tried to face the hopeless situation. I then got hold of Ballif, and all three together, we set about making plans as to what could be done. It was a hideous repetition of the situation of

last autumn, only much more tragic, because now it is our Ally Russia who causes us more despair than our enemy. In those days we looked upon the Russians as possible saviours and now they are worse than enemies. If the whole thing were not so fearfully tragic, it would be almost ludicrous.

So as not to spread panic, I have decided to keep to my plan of going to Botoşani to-morrow. Got to bed after one o'clock thoroughly heartbroken.

Jassy, Friday, July 14th/27th, 1917.

A long day's outing, taking Elisabetta with me, starting at nine. We went by Stepaneşti to Botoşani. Wherever I passed I stopped as usual to look at all the hospitals and bring them provisions.

We arrived at Botoşani at half-past twelve and were given an excellent lunch at the cavalry school, now commanded by our old friend, General Portocala, who was once colonel of my regiment. Everything was very nicely arranged and there were beautiful flowers, especially roses, for which Botoşani is celebrated.

I also saw another old friend, General Basarabescu, who in the first battles had two fingers shot off his right hand. It was a moving meeting as we had not seen each other since the fall of Bucarest. His mutilated hand was giving him great pain.

Ballif was going to the telephone all the time to speak with Prince Stirbey at Jassy, asking for news. For the moment nothing worse, which allowed us to breathe more freely, otherwise everything would have been unbearable, especially the thought of all the useless efforts that are being made to rebuild ourselves in every way.

We also looked at some horses; they even said I could choose one if I liked. Two of them pleased me very well, but one can never really judge of a horse until one has been on its back.

We left at about half-past six, had several punctures on the way and only reached Jassy a little after eleven.

Carol met us with news that sounded rather less hopeless; but I cannot rejoice, for we are too near the brink of the precipice.

Jassy, Saturday, 15th/28th July, 1917.

The children arrived from Ghidigeni, Mignon fearfully upset at having to leave, especially at a moment when all hands were needed and the wounded were being brought in in quantities. She was tremendously happy there and is actually getting thinner. If things calm down at all I shall certainly send her back, it is good for her. Mignon needed a little freedom and to be separated for a time from home, so as to develop her personality; she is too good-natured, therefore automatically becomes everybody's slave.

Ileana brought back a little tame chicken with her: the absurd animal follows her about everywhere, like a dog.

No special news to-day, but terrible battles are going on, on all the fronts. The Russians actually seem to be making a stand on a line somewhere near Cernovitz. There are also formidable and murderous battles going on in Flanders and in the Champagne. How can humanity stand it! It is a dreadful, dreadful time, and yet it has to be lived through, and has created many a wonderful virtue alongside of its fearfulness.

Jassy, Thursday, July 20th/August 2nd, 1917.

A hot and depressing day, so I didn't go out in the morning; besides, I am not feeling well; I am morally and physically depressed, I cannot throw off my cold or my anxiety.

Unlike my usual self I can sit and ponder, unoccupied, allowing black thoughts to invade my heart. I used to believe in my Luck, now it seems to be forsaking me with my youth! Is the spring going out of me, is my body going to turn traitor to me with all the rest? I suppose in happier days they would have said: "She needs a change of air, she ought to be sent somewhere to the sea!" I cannot be sent to the sea, we have no sea left, soon we may have no country left! That is Fate I suppose, but at least my body ought to behave. I must not be ill now.

Had many audiences, amongst others with Prince Kropotkin, very full of their hospital exploits during the last attack; he was enthusiastic about the way our soldiers fought. I

also saw Monsieur and Madame Titulescu, our new Finance Minister and his wife ; he is very intelligent and she is a pretty woman. Then Bratianu came with General Jancovescu, the new Minister of War. Also numerous ladies came with their different preoccupations.

All sorts of conflicting rumours about Russia are circulating. There is supposed to be a reaction towards severity, but can one know if this is true ? There are even murmurs of a return towards "Monarchy." But so great is the tragedy of Russia to-day that one hardly dares look into it, nor would one be able to look into it if one would. It is a fearful page in its history and Fate willed that we should be mixed up in it.

To keep up our spirits Nando and I take long drives in the evening, enjoying the pretty places we discover one by one. Nando also loves the peaceful and simple pleasure of searching for wild flowers. He is a wonderful botanist.

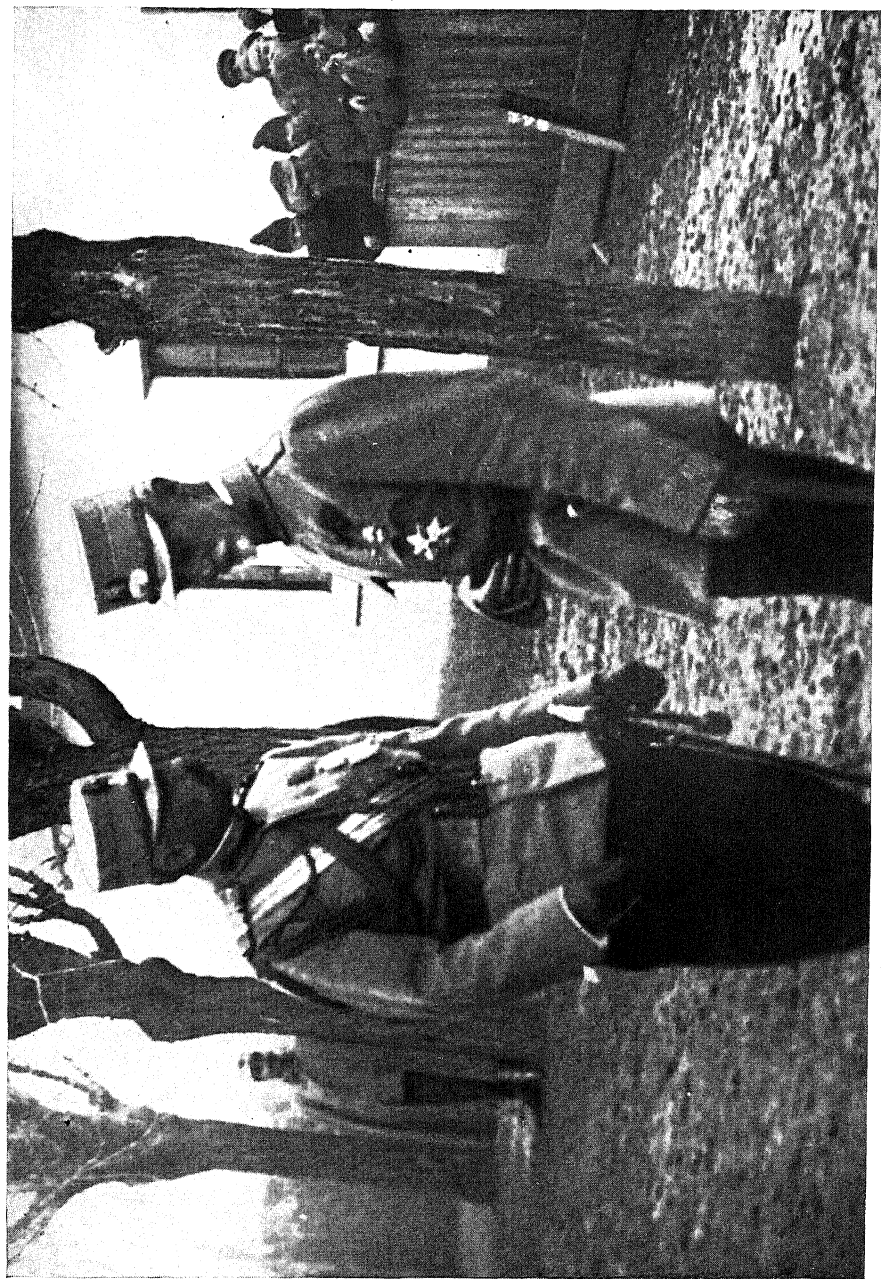
Unfortunately I am not feeling very well.

Jassy, Friday, July 21st/August 3rd, 1917.

Weather intolerably hot, dread of what is coming intolerably heavy, my body so aching that I remained in bed. There are moments when my fatigue seems to pour from me, when I must pause a moment to take breath. I am trying to do so, for God alone knows what new phase of suffering may be coming. To-day the news was worse than ever ; the Russians are giving way everywhere and our hour of disaster seems to be coming nearer and nearer. I feel waves of anxiety which almost amount to panic, rising all round me, but I am quite helpless. What can I do but submit to my fate without showing the awful despair which consumes me ?

It is all too big, too tragic, too mysterious, too overwhelming ; what can one single will, one courage, one sorrow do against the immensity of this tragedy which is taking place ? I can only prepare in silence for what may be coming ; I cannot stop it, but I *can* hope on to the very end.

Got up for lunch, depressed faces around me ; have to make plans for packing, plans for the next move into the



GENERAL AVERESCU AND COL. BALLIF.

unknown, and I have to make them silently with no show of emotion as though it were an everyday occurrence, for any show of emotion would make me break down.

At seven, a new arrival of Transylvanian troops made the day all the more tragic, they used to represent hope! Went down as I did the last time and stood up in my motor to see them pass, to greet them, to receive their cheers, to listen to their songs and their enthusiasm, but to-day our hearts were intolerably heavy.

It was the hottest day we had had; Ileana was almost ill with the heat and yet for the moment I dare not send her anywhere to the country.

It just has to be stood, there is nothing to be done. "Aushalten!"—that is all.

Jassy, Saturday, July 22nd/August 4th, 1917.

My name-day! All *jours de fêtes* are tragic now, but none will ever be as tragic as that last birthday of mine when Mircea was dying.

Many people came to congratulate me, all my different friends, also the whole Government. Everybody put on as brave faces as possible, but there were moments when I felt as though I must cry out my pain.

After lunch had a very sad interview with the officer we used to call "the beautiful Cossack," the one we met on our way to exile after the fall of Bucarest who was at the head of a magnificent hospital train sent by the Empress Mother. The man had been then like a victor, strong, decided, imperious, full of pride and courage. Now he was a desperate man, strength, hope, pride, all gone! He has had a dreadful time with his soldiers, who forsook him one by one and finally looted his train. Wounds received at the beginning of the War have broken open again, he suffers mortal pain, has a broken attitude, is not to be recognized.

He hardly dared look me in the face. They had come as friends to help us! And now our enemies do not make us suffer as much as this our one-time Ally!

Yes, it was a pathetic, tragic meeting, almost unbearable; finally I sat beside him holding his hand, for he had been an old friend.

To-day oppressive, as if a storm ought to come and cannot.

Carol sends telegrams from the villages which were taken back from the enemy during the recent successful attack we made, but this had to be stopped because of the Russian breakdown. He wants me to come, and I shall certainly do so if there is any possible chance. For the moment I am so sick with grief that I hardly dare think or plan.

Jassy, Sunday, July 23rd/August 5th, 1917.

My grief over the situation is so great that I am like one great wound, I can hardly bear to be touched even by word or look. Some things I cannot talk about at all, one must not talk of some things till they are over one way or another. What we must do now is to keep calm, we must neither weep nor fear, only get ready to meet our Fate. Judging by all that is happening it is probably the worst fate of all that we shall have to meet. There will always be time enough to lament when the last scrap of hope has been torn from us.

For lunch we had Monsieur and Madame Blondel (the French Minister and his wife) and Marincovitch, the Serbian Minister. The King gave the Blondels a decoration for their daughter Madame Camarasescu, a man's decoration that no woman as yet possesses in Roumania, because she really has been very brave all through the War, always there where it was hottest.

I have not been out for three days, my body needed rest, but at the same time a sort of morbid despair seizes me now, I, the great mover! At the idea of going about, I have a sort of dread of seeing places that perhaps we shall soon have to give up.

News continues bad; the Russians continue to move back without fighting, our frontiers are reached; there are no words to express our indignation; besides, it is not quite a feeling of indignation, it is something bigger and more crushing; head, heart and mind are not large enough to grasp all we feel.

Madame Mavrodi and her daughter, also Maruka and Lala Belloy, came to see me. People feel that they want

to group themselves around me, as we do not know how much longer we may be together. The whole day seems a long, haunting passage of sickening apprehension; one hardly dared rest one's mind on any thought and at the same time we had calmly to settle all our packing as though we were quietly starting for *un voyage de plaisir*.

What our troops are doing I do not know. I only know that we do not mean to die without making some sort of stand. I keep thinking of Ducky, wondering what she thinks of it all, if she knows. She must be full of cruellest despair.

I did not go to dinner with the others, but afterwards they all came to talk with me in my room.

Jassy, Monday, July 24th/August 6th, 1917.

Pulled myself together to-day and made the tour of certain hospitals, taking little Catherine Stirbey with me. I also went to Galata, where my little wooden barracks for my convalescents looked so sunny and peaceful. The vegetables we planted there have grown up so luxuriantly, enormous sunflowers brightened every corner, it all looked peace and content, a kindly effort achieved after many difficulties and much hard work; it all made me inexpressibly sad.

On the high road, the many children I always feed were awaiting me with eager, delighted faces, knowing that they never wait in vain. I gave with full hands and heavy heart, wondering how much longer I shall be able to give them a little joy.

For lunch we had Poclevski and General Candole. Poclevski hardly dared look us in the face, so ashamed is he of his country. I had a good talk with him, insisting upon a few points which would make the intolerable a little less intolerable. We asked to go to Rostoff on the Don if we have to move into Russia, and that our Roumanian ships should go there, so that we can live on board if we want, without having to search for a house.

Sœur Pucci, with several of her sisters and Madame Vaudescale, a young Roumanian woman who married one of the French doctors, came to say good-bye to me. They are leaving for Odessa to await events. I think it reason-

able that people should evacuate by degrees so that there should not be a rush if danger comes ; I always keep the hope that they will return soon, because the tragedy is so great that I still cannot accept the thought that it really can be.

Jean Chrissoveloni came to me. He was calm, still full of hope, but he too is making plans for evacuation if necessary, plans that remind one of nomads moving in the days of the Bible. In the evening Prince Stirbey came with rather bad news.

It is not astonishing that the general despair is great. No situation could be worse ; if the dread hour comes we have only flaming Russia to move into. Many are already leaving so as to avoid a crush at the last moment if the real debacle comes.

Each day we make new plans and none seems even half-way bearable. The King has sworn to me that whatever happens I shall be allowed to remain with him in the army on Roumanian ground to its last possible limit. Nothing will induce me to go off as many are trying to persuade me to do.

Jassy, Tuesday, July 25th/August 7th, 1917.

A day of suspense, and news continues bad though nothing definite except that somewhere on our front our troops were driven back by poison gases, one of these cowardly inventions of modern war.

We continue to pack and to prepare for the worst, calmly combining everything as though we were to start for a pleasure trip, yet we do not know where we should go, nor in what conditions, nor in what way we should be received by our unruly neighbours. All this a none too encouraging prospect, but we still hope that this bitterest of all cups will pass us by !

Weather cooler, in fact quite pleasant. Went with Catherine Stirbey to bring food to the most miserable of my consumptives. Hardly had I reached home when old Mr. Baker came to me, he too to talk over the sad evacuation question. It is all very upsetting when one goes about with an oppressed feeling as though one couldn't breathe freely.

Received a telegram from San Francisco to announce that Red Cross doctors and nurses are starting out to bring us help ! This too makes me sad ; yesterday it would have been wonderful news, but now I keep wondering if anything will be able to help us any more, and just now people seem to want to help from all sides. I had dreamt of doing a lot of good to my unfortunate people, but instead I shall perhaps have to forsake them entirely !

Prince Stirbey came to tea. We hunted up possible places on the Russian map. I cannot bear the idea of going north, I like to cling to the south, and, besides, it is nearer home.

Carol came back from the front with much to relate. He says our troops were wonderful, their spirit excellent ; it was a surprise attack and the astonishment of the enemy was so great that they fled in disorder, their officers *en tête*. If we had only been able to follow up our success great things could have been done whilst the confusion lasted in the enemy's ranks ; but, alas, the Russians failing entirely in the north, it became a danger to allow our troops to advance. Cruel circumstances, bitterly hard for our men, who are fighting to win back their homes.

Jassy, Wednesday, July 26th/August 8th, 1917.

Went with Catherine Stirbey up to the Cetașuia (the old fortress) to visit the convalescents Maruka is looking after. The place is really beautiful, but the road to get up there is more than disheartening. Here Maruka's friend and slave-like follower, Mlle. Pruncu, rules supreme ; I found everything in good order, and although this was a surprise visit I had no complaint to make about how things were being run.

No special news to-day. There is a pause in the German advance. Near Focșani on the Galatz-Mărășești line they are fighting, and the Russians for the moment *encadrés* by our troops are behaving and holding out. We fluctuate between hope and fear, but we continue to pack and to get ready for sudden departure if necessary.

Nando had a big war council to-day. I do not exactly know what was the result ; I only know that he came an

hour late for lunch; St.-Aulaire and the Duc de Luynes were both invited and were very nice and kind, very distressed for us and our poor country; they have become good friends, having lived through our trials with us.

After lunch received several doctors and also Mr. Goodsell of the Y.M.C.A., all of them to discuss the evacuation question, and finally Lise Soutzo, who came from Neamtz. She was looking very thin, having energetically worked in her convalescent camp near Piatra, she too terribly distressed over what is happening. All was going beautifully. She is quite near the new battle-line; it breaks her heart to think of having to give up all the work begun, and like me, to the end she hopes it will not have to be.

Jassy, Friday, July 28th/August 10th, 1917.

No specially bad news, but all day carry about with me a feeling of dread. There are huge battles going on on the Focşani line where the Germans have massed great forces. Although nearly everywhere the Russian army has fallen to pieces, here, fired by our soldiers, they seem to be doing their duty, but it is always uncertain if they will hold out, and this makes our position insupportably precarious as the Germans are past masters in profiting by every weakness. Our poor little soldiers are fighting like heroes. I am afraid many are falling, and I am in a terrible state of impatience to get off to my hospitals at the front, to my wounded—I feel a coward not to be amongst them.

Received a number of people, including General Ballard and Constance Cantacuzène to whom we gave the cross of the Regina Maria.

I actually received a letter from Mamma from Zurich and one from faithful Gretchen von Raben, but from Ducky nothing for a long, long time, which fills me with constant anxiety.

In my house they continue to pack, and have taken so many things away that it has really become rather uncomfortable, and yet all the time I have the feeling that we are not going! The idea is too ghastly—going into what?

Jassy, Saturday, July 29th/August 11th, 1917.

All day long the news was anxious but varied. Towards evening, however, it got worse, especially on the Oituzi side. At dinner, Nando was very worried and not pleased with the way things were going. I think he is contemplating a change of command amongst his generals.

Also Averescu's army was beaten back to-day towards Ocna, a very important spot for us, as it is there that we get our last oil. I am afraid our chances become smaller and smaller, for the Germans are bringing large forces up against us.

Jassy, Sunday, July 30th/August 12th, 1917.

I went with Elisabetta to the Russian hospital, where they have received a batch of about four hundred wounded, badly wounded. I visited them all giving them cigarettes and sweets which they seemed to appreciate, and the nurses and doctors were pleased to see me again; they have suffered much from the change, are very sad and humiliated and glad to group themselves round even a foreign queen.

The Russians had turned their St. George medals face downwards; as I went from bed to bed, I kept turning Nicky's face uppermost again, sweetly smiling into their faces as I did so. They looked at me with great astonishment, but did not protest.

Some of the soldiers were sullen, not knowing if it was beneath their dignity to be amiable with a queen, not realizing that if they could not be pleasant with a queen, they could be so with a woman who had come to see them because they are suffering. Some, however, were frankly pleased and smiled, saying things to me which I could not understand; others were beyond either appreciation or resentment, they were nearer the other shore. I came home to receive Mrs. Rattigan, who is in great trouble. She is the wife of the English Chargé d'Affaires, who is laid up with a bad knee and is in great pain and unable to move, which is a tragedy to them, because if the worst came to the worst they would have to contemplate being taken prisoners by the Germans; awful thought!

The news from all sides is more bad than good, although I cannot help having a certain amount of hope. But there are murderous battles going on about Oituzi, Focşani, Mărăşeşti.

Carol is leaving for the front, so I shall profit by his departure to go with him, taking only Mignon and Ballif with me, as I want as little fuss as possible. I shall first go to Ghidigeni so as to visit my Regina Maria hospitals, and from there go on as far as I can.

Ghidigeni, Monday, July 31st/August 13th, 1917.

A noisy night in the train, great turmoil at all the stations.

After breakfast left my train to go to the Ghidigeni house. Mignon, who was in a state of excitement to get back to her work and to her companions, had got up early so as to present herself at the usual hospital hour as though she had never been away. I have never seen my good Mignon so excited. She has really put all her honour in this work. When I arrived at the hospital there she was amongst the nurses. Mignon is one of the humble workers. She will do anything and has no wish to shine, she will just as readily wash the windows, sweep the floor, or serve up the meals, as hold a man's leg when it is to be cut off. Mignon has no pretensions.

I spent a long time in the hospital, which is quite full. There were terrible wounds, and they were just bandaging them. I must say it was an awful moment, and the place was full of screams and groans. Joan, my servant who always goes with me, was ill, so to-day I had another following me about, carrying all the things I give; he could not bear the sight of the wounds, he turned green and had to leave the room. Seeing all the suffering, the immense folly of all this war struck me again—why, why, why? And such young creatures, and so mutilated; arms and legs missing, perforated lungs and bowels, paralysed spines, trepanned skulls, etc.; oh, what cruel folly!

I spent a long time amongst them distributing my small gifts, which they received eagerly, Russians as well as Roumanians.

My faithful Sybil followed me about everywhere, she is

so touchingly glad to have me here. She works from morning till night seeing to everything; she is wonderful and keeps the whole thing going, besides having open house for anybody who comes that way, no matter what nationality, nor what standing—real hospitality in its broadest sense. I saw nothing of her husband, who is dashing about in our Regina Maria ambulances somewhere near the front.

A short rest after lunch and the whole of the afternoon I spent visiting endless other hospitals arranged in wooden barracks! I did my duty bravely, going to every single wounded man and giving him something; it was 8 p.m. by the time I got home and I confess to having been absolutely exhausted when it was over, especially the soles of my feet, which refused to carry me any farther.

No cannons to be heard to-day, perfect peace and such quiet in the country after the noise of Jassy. It was pleasant to get out of my boots, to wash my face and hands, because I was what other people would call dead tired, but it is not my way to confess fatigue.

Jean Chrissoveloni and Carol both appeared at the same time from different sides with different news. Alas, our friends the Russians, continue as usual to relinquish their positions, whilst our brave regiments are beyond praise. It seems that they have been wonderful, but there are terrible losses. A change has been made in the command; General Grigorescu will have some of the Russian troops under him, and let us hope he will be able to make them obey.

Mignon worked all day, she took to it again like a fish to water! Even after dinner she was still working and I went back to my bed in the train before she did. The marvellous quiet of the country does me good, but I had a headache nearly all day. Carol lives in the Ghidigeni house. I have decided to stop two days longer to inspect other hospitals, but I am living in my train.

Ghidigeni, Tuesday, August 1st/14th, 1917.

This was the most peaceful, quiet night I have had for ages; a real country awakening amidst the woods where my carriage was standing. Oh, I love the country, and for several years I have had nothing of it. The morning was

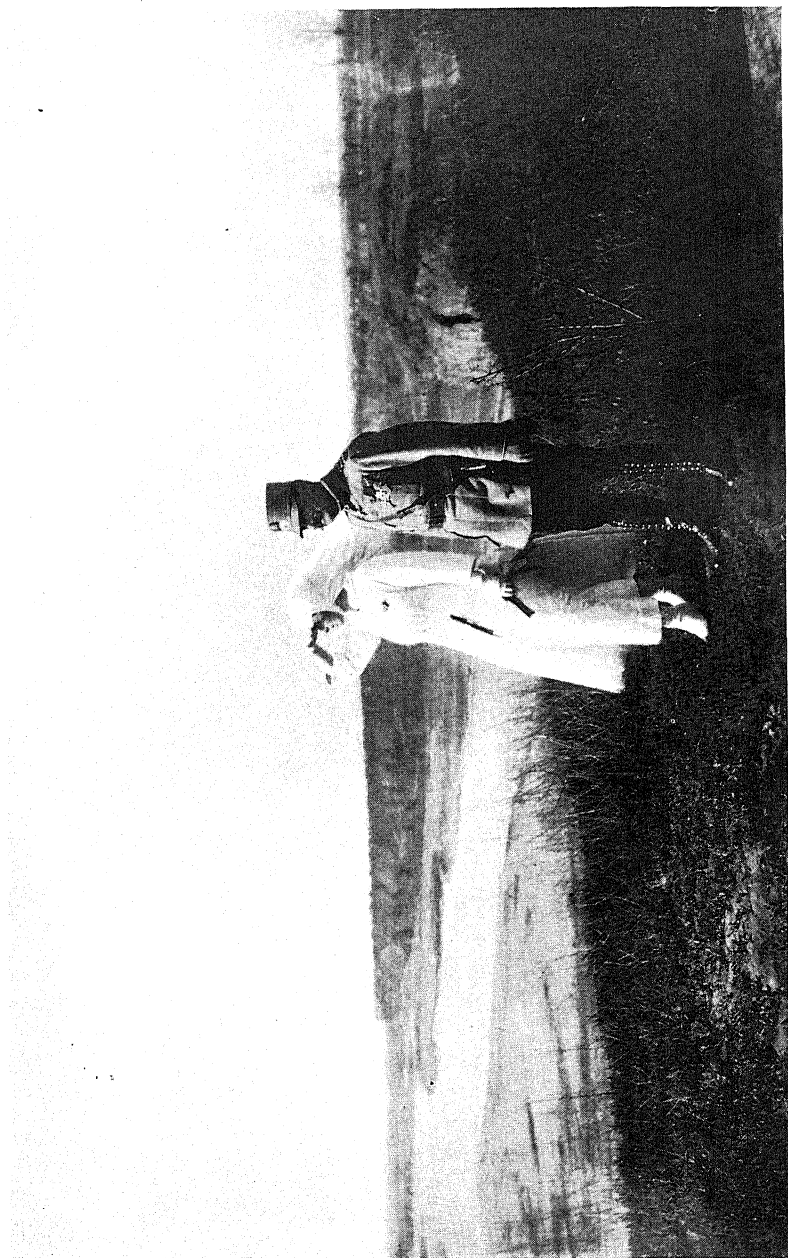
beautifully fresh and everything was drenched with heavy dew, but later the day became tremendously hot.

Went over to the house at eight for breakfast with all the hospital people, then till half-past nine walked about the hospital, talking to all the wounded, smiling in no language at the Russians. Some have friendly faces and are glad to see one, others are sullen. One young Russian has so much the face of Nicky (the ex-Emperor) that I go each time and sit by his bed. There are frightfully wounded men amongst them; two died to-day. There is also a German prisoner, a painter from Munich, whose right hand has been badly wounded. He is a friendly fellow and I have long talks with him about all sorts of things: about Munich and the Munich painters, about the folly of war, about the beauty of Roumania and the niceness of the Roumanian people. He is much interested in them from an artistic point of view. I really quite enjoyed my talk with him and we certainly forgot that we were supposed to be enemies.

I went from bed to bed and many of the wounded have already become quite good friends. Mignon was working like mad at whatever she could put her hand to. She simply loves her work, and I have decided to leave her here; Carol guarantees her safety "with his head," as he is remaining in these parts.

At half-past nine Carol, Sybil, Ballif and I started off for Tecuci to visit hospitals. Went first to the Cincu Hospital (so-called because it is arranged in the Cincu house, where the severest cases are brought and where two good French doctors are in charge). But the hospital itself is not well kept; it smelt horrid, the men looked rather neglected, and the women who showed us round were not very attentive to the frightfully wounded men. Saw awful things that tore my heart, unbearable things that make one's very soul shudder. Brought a little consolation wherever I could, but I am sadly aware that it is less than nothing! I can only let them feel that I have come to them in their trouble.

We found Vartejanu there, the brother of Carol's orderly officer, with a terrible leg; they are sorely afraid that he will lose it, but they are sending him to Jassy to Doctor Bonachi, who is his uncle.



WITH GENERAL GRIGORESCU DURING THE BATTLE OF MĂRĂȘEȘTI.

From here we went to the hospital *de triage* which is just beyond the station. It is there that the wounded arrive from the battlefield. I went about amongst them talking to them and giving them cigarettes. Then I climbed into the carriages, which is a difficult business as there are no steps and I can only get into them by kneeling with one knee on the floor of the carriage and drawing myself up. This manœuvre oft repeated is excruciatingly fatiguing. Whilst we were there the Boches began bombarding the station, and as we drove off we saw the shells exploding, throwing up dark masses of smoke and earth quite near by. I drove to General Grigorescu to pay him a visit, as he is a very formal gentleman and likes attention. I found him in the middle of his council of war. I was pompously invited to take part in it and listened very attentively, poring over maps and asking various, I hope not too stupid, questions. It was a strange experience, as we are standing before such imminent danger. I left Carol with the general and drove back with Sybil to lunch at Ghidigeni, having arranged with Grigorescu to return in the afternoon to inspect his battlefield.

So I returned at four o'clock; the road between Ghidigeni and Tecuci is a real torture, and I did it four times to-day in broiling heat. Picked up Carol, who drove me and Mignon to a very advanced position above the River Siret, where we could see everything, that is to say, very little except the bursting shells before us and right over our heads. Already as we drove along the road the shells were bursting on our left one after another, a curious sensation, but it all looked so simple that one can hardly imagine the dreadful reality; the dreadful reality is much more visible in the hospitals. It certainly made us feel very excited, and filled us to the brim with hopeful anxiety.

Drove home over the dreadful road and as a last effort paid another visit to the wounded at the Mircea Hospital.

Feeling somewhat exhausted, soon after supper I retired to my train.

Here I must insert a few words before going on with my every-day record.

The astonishing and perhaps unexpected resistance our small army set up against overwhelming German forces is a thing which will for ever remain a glory in the annals of our national history.

In spite of the bad example of the Russians, who had mostly turned Bolshevik and were daily abandoning their positions by the thousand, our soldiers, underfed, insufficiently armed and hardly ever relieved, remained staunch to a man, unshaken amidst the *débâcle* of their erstwhile allies.

I had been with them everywhere—in the hospitals, on the front, right into the trenches; I had seen them gradually turn again from half-starved skeletons into healthy human beings. I had sustained with all my energy and with my every effort the miraculous resurrection; helping, upholding, encouraging when and wherever it was in my power to do so, till a bond of perfect affection and understanding had grown up on both sides—a comfort to them as it was to me.

Looking into the eyes of their Queen, they had sworn to stand up like a wall to defend the last scrap of Roumanian territory which was still ours. Many a dying soldier whispered to me with his last breath that it was for me that he was fighting, for was I not his home, his mother, his belief and his hope?

Humbly I had stood before such magnificently simple faith, and when on that morning, in company with the generals who were planning our resistance, I had pored over their maps, I saw again before me those many nameless faces—I saw those many eyes which had looked into mine for a last reassurance, I felt those hundred trembling hands which clung to me before sinking into darkness, and in my heart of hearts I knew that I could count upon our soldiers and that in spite of being such a small army we would win through.

And this for me, "the mother of my people," was the battle of Mărășești.

Ghidigeni, Wednesday, August 2nd/15th, 1917.

Awoke after a good night's sleep in the train to find everything covered with thick dew, birds actually singing in the trees around me as though it were springtime. The

morning was heavenly and cool, but turned gradually into one of the hottest days I have ever endured.

Went up to the house for eight o'clock breakfast with everybody together, then wandered about for an hour amongst the wounded, talking to them, listening to their tales of woe, consoling them, lighting a cigarette here and there. It is a beautifully kept hospital and those cared for in it are tremendously lucky, for indeed there are differences in hospitals! When I think of that dreadfully smelly Cincu hospital, I am so glad that this one has Mircea's name.

At half-past nine Sybil and her husband, Ballif and I, started off for Cotofănești, the day gradually getting hotter and hotter. The roads were mostly atrocious, and as for the dust, absolutely nothing can describe it; it lay in thick quilts on the ground and rose like impenetrable smoke on all sides. It was brown dust, and into the bargain we kept meeting Russian transport columns, kilometres of them, so that we were regularly asphyxiated by dust. We ate our lunch on a hill overlooking the Siret whence there was a glorious view over the whole valley, but much veiled by the dust which lay like mist over everything, blotting out the horizon. The place where we sat was strongly fortified with wire and trenches.

After lunch we wound our way down into the Siret valley, crossing the river, through Adjud to Caiuți, a torturing drive of heat, of dust and bumps; as physical discomfort it was about the limit, but it was interesting all the same, and the sound of cannon reached us from both sides, from the north and the south.

Carol had meant to come with us, but there is a great battle going on there where we were yesterday, so he went to Grigorescu for the day.

We first stopped at Caiuți to visit the Regina Maria hospital there. They have done tremendous work, the doctors toiling day and night for four days without stopping, as it is one of the big centres to which the wounded are brought. There are two quite excellent French doctors who do wonderful work, and never lose their excellent good-humour. I spent a long time going around amongst the wounded with cigarettes and other gifts, talking to them and en-

couraging them as much as I could. The heat was indescribable, and I needed all my courage not to give up. I have stood much heat in Roumania, but to-day was the *comble*.

After having gone to every single wounded man in the place we started for Cotăfănești; more dust, more bumps, but the touching incident of marching troops recognizing me and spontaneously cheering, taking off their helmets to wave over their heads. I stopped my motor and left a lot of cigarettes amongst them. At about half-past three we finally reached Cotăfănești, which is one of the largest Regina Maria centres with beautiful wooden barracks built by General Vaitoianu. His wife and two daughters work there as nurses and many other ladies, but, alas, too few, as the hospital is for a thousand beds.

At the moment there are five hundred wounded; this also is a centre for severely wounded, as it is quite near the front. My old friend Dr. le Laurier is commandant here. The hospital is built in a beautiful spot amongst large poplar trees, overlooking the River Trotuș, with wooded hills in the background.

Here on a little hill just above the hospital, General Vaitoianu and Jean Chrissoveloni have built me a lovable little wooden house, whence I have a double view over the Trotuș and the hills.

Just as we arrived we nearly had a spill in our motor, as we met another motor and in trying to make way, part of the road, which was new, collapsed under us. Many screams from Sybil, but after having leaned over at a perilous angle the motor stuck and we crawled out, arriving at our destination on foot.

A few minutes' rest in the nurses' department, trying to wash off a little of our dust; we had really suffered badly from the heat, which continued to be overpowering, but here at last were shade and water!

The moment we felt presentable we started visiting the place. In spite of fatigue and indescribable heat, I did everything that was expected of me with heroic persistence, going into every corner, looking at everything, talking to everybody and giving gifts to all the wounded, feeling the while that I was melting away like a dish of jelly.



THE KING AND I AMONGST OUR TROOPS NEAR OTTUZI.

Finally, at about half-past five, I was at last able to get up to inspect my own little house, which is one of the sweetest, neatest and most practical little constructions I have ever seen, with two large, open verandas facing both sides of the valley, so that one or the other is always in shade; from each there is a marvellous view.

The house is built in perfect taste, every detail charming. As it is perched on the very top of the hill they have built a covered wooden gallery which climbs up towards it like a small cloistered walk of wooden columns, with Roumanian carving. A treasure of a place.

Up there I found Sybil awaiting me with a welcome cup of tea, a table spread upon the open veranda upon which the sun was pouring down. The heat was still almost unbearable, but the little house is cool, being built with double walls. I loved the place. It has been erected with the idea that I can settle down there if I want to live amongst the wounded of my own Regina Maria hospitals, as it is the most central point. This was Jean Chrissoveloni's idea, because he knows what a sacrifice it was to me to give up my own hospital.

All the French and Roumanian doctors, as well as the nurses, came up to rejoice with me over my little house, and finally we left accompanied by many wishes that I should come back as soon as possible to take possession of my little dwelling amongst the wounded; as answer the roll of the cannon from north and south, the cannons that are these days deciding our Fate.

Half-way back on a road which tortured us with bumps and dust, Chrissoveloni left us to dash off to see about our motor ambulances at Mărășești. He is indefatigable, sees to everything himself, keeps our organization in perfect order, goes even under fire, into bombarded villages and positions. The Regina Maria ambulances are doing priceless work; on all sides I have been told that thousands and thousands of lives have been saved because of the admirable way our organization works. I am really proud of it!

It was Jean Chrissoveloni's idea that I should start this ambulance organization, because he wanted my name to be

carried into the very battle-line. He really *is* a good friend. A welcome bath in Sybil's room was splendidly refreshing after twelve hours' hard work in overpowering heat. It really *was* a day. After supper I sat on the terrace enjoying the evening coolness and talking over military matters with Carol and Grigorescu.

General Grigorescu is of course anxious, understanding the extreme gravity of the situation, but at the same time he is confident because of the extraordinary spirit of our troops. The Russians remain the shady side of the picture; I suppose it must be considered a miracle that they still fight at all.

I was back in my train at midnight. I am leaving Mignon here in Carol's care.

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Chapter XIX

WORK AT THE FRONT

Jassy, Thursday, August 3rd/16th, 1917.

I HAVE at last received a letter from Ducky, who is at a place in Finland called Borgo; she thinks of having her baby there. Up to the present she has been pretty well, but is now suffering from dreadful cramps in her legs and cannot even stand! Her despair at the last events in Russia can find no expression.

Irène Procopiu is actually leaving, as she wants to take her daughters to Denmark and is going to try and see Ducky on the way.

Ileana is excited and delighted about a new little horse that has been given to her. I have promised to ride out with her early to-morrow.

No news from the front to-day. Nando has sent Ballif off to Averescu's army to inquire into the state of affairs there.

Jassy, Saturday, August 5th/18th, 1917.

A busy, almost breathless, morning, everybody seemed to want to see me at the same time. Various Russians, whose organizations have fallen to pieces, but who have still great provisions, want to work under my orders.

In between two audiences dashed off to see Vartejianu's brother, who is now at the Brancovan hospital where Nadèjde Stirbey is working. I found him on the operating table in great pain, but they hope all the same to save his leg.

News has reached us that the Tsar and his family have been transported to Tobolsk, no one knows why. What are they going to do with poor Nicky? I am so anxious, and no possibility of being in touch with any of them.

Spent the afternoon writing and painting with Ileana, who was sweeter and more lovely than ever. Her charm

is so great that it is like having a flower in the room ; she is very preoccupied about two letters she wants to write in answer to letters received from her Russian cousins who wrote to her (Ducky's daughters).

Jassy-Roman, Tuesday, August 8th/21st, 1917.

An early start with Nicky, Miss Milne, Major Georgescu and old Mr. Baker for Roman. Good road, atmosphere delicious because it had rained, and the car going well, so that we arrived punctually at Madame Nevruze's house ; tidied up a bit after having been ecstatically received by that excellent lady and then a long two hours' visit at the Mircea Hospital where my giant English brothers have done wonders.

Now the hospitals are again full of wounded instead of typhus cases. Innumerable fractured legs, which come, it seems, principally from hand grenades. Alas, a great number of amputations, but everywhere the spirit of the men was high, full of courage, mightily interested in the game of war ; but seeing all the havoc I continued repeating to myself : " What folly, what folly ! "

After lunch at Madame Nevruze's house, where she served us excellent and plentiful food, we started out for more hospitals, beginning with the Red Cross hospital which is now directed by Dr. Mărzescu, who used to work with the English. Then to another Red Cross hospital somewhat smaller, then to some huge wooden barracks near the station where there are about a thousand beds. From there to another hospital in the station itself, and then still to the *triage*. No end ! And everywhere I give things and talk to the soldiers, doctors, nurses, officers, doing my duty as best I can ! But it is fatiguing, yet how dare one think of a little fatigue when one sees so much suffering ; I therefore crush down all my own physical sensations and go on and on, never refusing to visit a single place I am asked to inspect. This keeps up the morale of the wounded, also of the doctors and nurses. These visits are not in vain ; besides, I can listen to all complaints and step in where there is need. For instance at the *triage*, the French doctors told me that the men were very underfed, so I am going to send them all the provisions I can.

Having visited all the principal hospitals, I started off for a village near by where they have arranged a little home for orphans, and this left a sunny impression upon me. It was a sort of large peasant's house where they were keeping only eighteen children, who all looked happy, well cared for, neatly dressed yet suitably for the little peasants that they are; it seemed to me that it was being practically and rationally run. Some of the children were irresistible, especially two little boys, and each time I see little boys between four and five a hungry longing comes over me.

I fed them on sweets and gave them little crosses to wear round their necks, then my hands were kissed by numerous women of the village, the beautiful Roumanian sun pouring down upon us all, great and small, high and low. Then back to Madame Nevruze, who had gathered together a miscellaneous collection of people in her garden for tea, upon all of whom I had to smile. There were French, English, Russians, Roumanians. I tried to be sweet to everybody and finally drove off at half-past seven, arriving at Jassy only at nine, to receive the military news that on the Mărășești side the enemy seems to weaken their attacks, concentrating more violently on the Oituzi where our troops are being sorely tried. Alas, some ground seems to have been lost there.

Jassy, Wednesday, August 9th/22nd, 1917.

The King has come back from the front. After breakfast I had a long military talk with him and Ballif, who had also come back but from the other front where he had been with Averescu. On the whole the news he brought was satisfactory. He thinks that in spite of the great pressure and our terrible losses—for the battles are inconceivably bloody—that our troops can hold out. He came back full of praise for men and officers; but the transport of troops is difficult, we have too few lorries and the poor horses are in bad condition. On the whole there is a prodigious difference between our army of to-day and yesterday; it is a marvellous and almost inconceivable resurrection, only it *is* a small army!

Ballif was also full of praise for Averescu. He is always

amongst his troops, sees to everything himself; calm, courageous, he shies at no danger. He is much adored by his men.

In the French hospital this morning, where I went with Nicky, I found my old friend Colonel Radu Rossetti badly wounded in the leg, a fracture of the hip bone; alas! I am afraid his active part in this war is over, but he was as cheerful as ever and full of the ardour of battle, chattering away, full of enthusiasm, he, too, loud in the praise of his troops.

In the afternoon I drove out with Elisabetta to take Petrachi, a little gipsy friend of mine, in one of the villages, some little shirts I had had made for him. He was expecting us, and the whole village had come together to see his triumph; his old clothes, or shall I say rags, were removed and nut-brown Petrachi was shoved into a very white little shirt with a red belt round his middle, and a red bow in front; I must confess Petrachi looked like a nigger; his rags suited him better.

Then Elisabetta and I went to a field farther off and picked quantities of sunflowers. We loved the wild flowers round about Jassy, they are different from those we used to find near Bucarest.

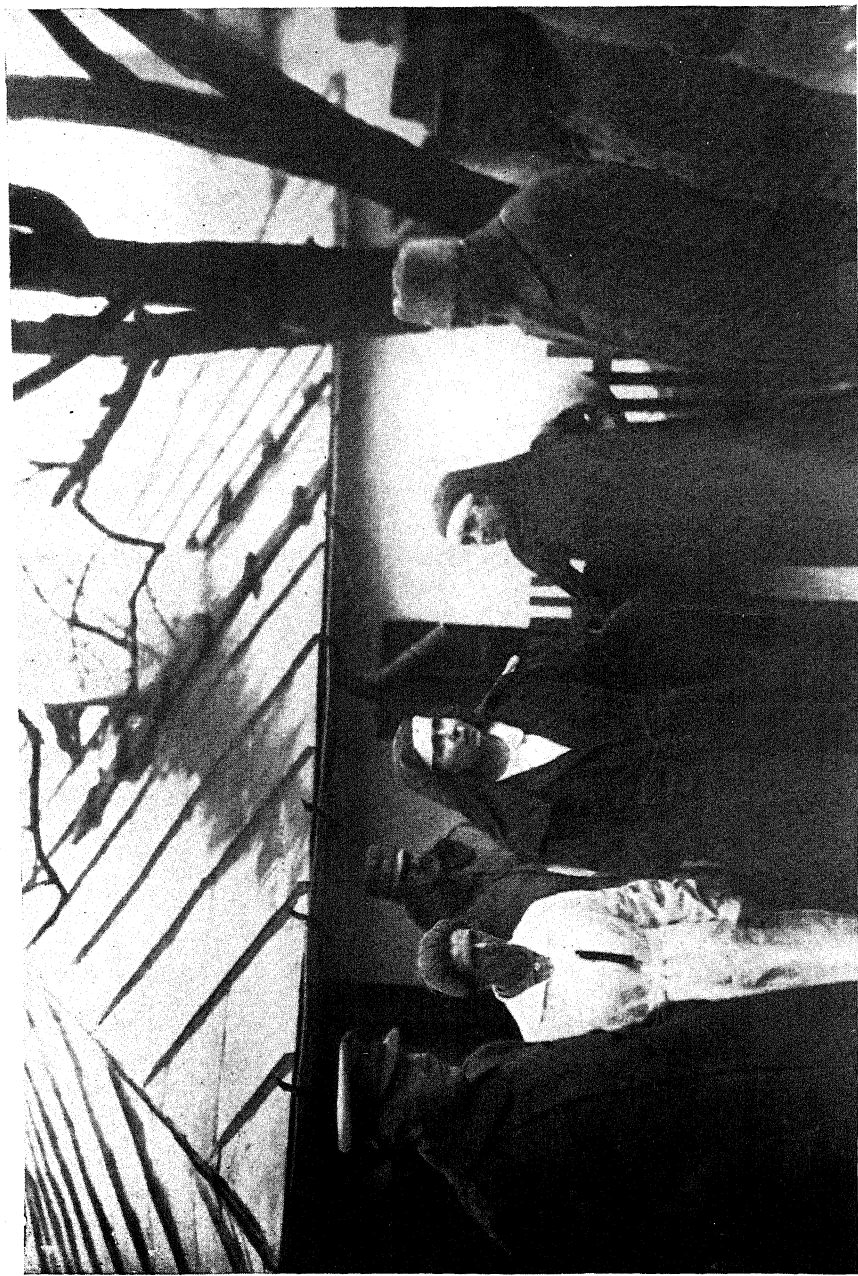
Military news more reassuring to-day: the Italians have had considerable successes, also the French near Verdun. We are holding on.

Mignon is still working at Ghidigeni. Carol is still at the front.

Jassy, Friday, August 11th/24th, 1917.

Nando's fifty-second birthday; I gave him a bowl of English soap, a war-time present. And yet we are happier to-day in spite of our disasters than we were last year when the great step had to be taken, and when the decision almost broke his heart.

When the die was cast, when there was no going back, it was more tolerable, in spite of all the sickness, disappointment and misfortunes that followed. And now, after nearly a year's war, our land is smaller instead of larger! But the link between us and our people has become deep and



VISITING POOR HOSPITALS ON THE FRONT WITH COL. ANDERSON.

real, a link of trust and of sorrows mutually borne without complaint. And at this moment we are so proud of our troops and their splendid spirit that it gladdens our hearts and makes us believe in the future in spite of our vicissitudes. I spent my morning paying private sick visits, and then we had a lunch in the King's house, to which we had invited the Generals Prezan, Berthelot and Tcherbacheff.

Left at eleven by train for Piatra and Bacau.

Piatra-Bacau, August 12th/25th, 1917.

A pretty good night in the train, then a strenuous morning at Piatra amongst the sick and wounded. Piatra is such a pretty little town at the mouth of the Bistrița valley. Averescu met us and also the prefect, who used to be an old friend of Aunt's at Arges, a rather tryingly familiar old gentleman, but kindly and it seems a good prefect, which after all is the main thing!

We first went to the Red Cross hospital, then to a sanatorium for French doctors and officers, a charming little house which they adore and go to with great pleasure. They had always longed that I should visit them there and greeted me with gratifying pleasure. Thence I paid a flying visit to Madame Albu, who once in my youth had been my hostess, whilst my husband and I were making an excursion through the Bistrița valley; now she is a widow and is very ill; she looks ghastly. We talked of olden days and were very sad, but she was glad I had come to see her, also very touched, as she is very lonely and almost a complete invalid.

From her house off we went over the river to the huge convalescent hospital which my friend Lise Soutzo is looking after, and which is the pride of Averescu's heart. It is a splendid undertaking and has already housed a thousand men, but he wants to enlarge it so that it could hold four thousand. Lise and an eager little Roumanian doctor run it together most beautifully; Lise has much tact, and although the only woman there manages to tread on no one's toes. She has to work tremendously hard and has been living up to now in a tiny rough little cabin at the end of one of the wooden barracks. Two weeks ago a sweet little

house was built for her just above the hospital overlooking the whole ground; it has a lovely view and I had the pleasure of enjoying her little boy who was living with her. The only criticism I have to make is that the site of the actual hospital is absolutely treeless; the situation of my Cotofănești hospital is much prettier, because of its poplar groves, though here the hills are higher. I bravely did my usual round amongst the sick, offering my gifts. From early morning the heat to-day was tremendous and steadily grew as the hours advanced.

Lise is an excellent companion and looked after me splendidly; I had only Elisabetta with me and no lady-in-waiting. Lunch was served on the hill-side overlooking the whole hospital and was taken in the company of the convalescent officers. We also visited the other site quite near by where the new barracks are to be built, then returned to Piatra to visit the big Russian hospital. The doctor talked French, and everybody, even the soldiers, was amiable and decidedly pleased to see us. Averescu talks perfect Russian and I must say does his duty with irreproachable dignity and order.

Then off we drove in scorching heat towards Bacau, visiting on the way what they call the *triage* hospital, also an enormous colony of barracks through which we wandered whilst a torrid sun poured mercilessly down upon our heads. Averescu went with us everywhere and it can easily be seen how his soldiers love him.

At Bacau we were received by Madame Averescu in their nice, clean, comfortable house where we are going to live for two days. It was very restful to have a good cup of tea and then a delicious bath before dinner.

Lise Soutzo and the Russian general, Ragosa, were invited to dine with us, and the excellent meal was served by two pretty German girls.

Before going to bed, Averescu came to my room to have a heart-to-heart talk with me. He considers that he has much of which to complain. I listened with sympathy and promised to let him know if I perceived that any intrigue was being hatched against him. I was sorry when I realized how ill-used he felt, for he has worked hard, kept

his army in excellent condition, has been active in every direction, and is adored by his men and officers; yet it is evident that Head-quarters have no great faith in him. This is naturally exasperating to a man who feels he has done his duty and has been brave into the bargain.

We talked for a long time and I think that for once the haughty, reserved man said almost openly what he felt and what was oppressing his mind. I was as kind to him as I possibly could be and I hope that he felt a little happier when he left me, having been able to talk so openly with his Queen.

Bacau, Sunday, August 13th/26th, 1917.

A day of strenuous hard work, hospitals, hospitals, hospitals, one after another all day long. To begin with an enormous military hospital arranged in huge barracks, formerly heavy artillery barracks, where there were over a thousand wounded; we went into every single room, did our duty unflinchingly, in spite of intense fatigue. But the day was less hot. We visited also kitchens and depots and a pottery where they made all the necessary dishes for the hospital; everything well run and on a very large scale. From there to another enormous hospital arranged in several huge corn barns. Saw a terrible lot of suffering, but everywhere the wounded were touched to see us; I feel that these visits do good, it consoles the wounded and encourages those who are looking after them. There are some excellent doctors at Bacau.

We had a quiet, restful lunch and only started off again at half-past four, but then it was on and on from one hospital to another till half-past eight. I feel quite confused about how many hospitals we saw! I only know that we got more and more tired, till we hardly knew what we felt. Our feet were in a state of active torture, and Elisabeth's knee was giving her great pain, for her knee-cap gets easily out of place, which naturally saps her energy.

We came back thoroughly and completely exhausted, hardly knowing how to stand on our feet. Luckily there was a heavy thunderstorm round about seven o'clock which relieved everybody as the day had been intolerably sultry.

Bacău-Onești, Monday, August 14th/27th, 1917.

Awoke rested, although for the first time I can remember I was too tired to sleep. I tossed about for hours unable to close an eye, my limbs aching and tingling with extraordinary fatigue! I had not realized that I was *so* tired. It was as though my blood continued racing although my body was at rest. But next day I began duty early; I did not even go to breakfast, as I had to write my name on a few hundred postcards. I felt rushed and pressed, and although it had rained heavily in the night it was still very close and heavy. At half-past nine we began again visiting hospitals, working ceaselessly till half-past twelve, when I snatched a hasty bite of lunch and then threw myself into improvised riding clothes, as General Averescu had invited me to pay a visit to the front. With Lise Soutzo and Ballif we started off by motor for Onești, a beautiful but dreadfully bumpy road over hill and dale, delightfully wooded in places, with often lovely views.

We arrived at Onești punctually at four as expected. The cannons were thundering from the hills; here Averescu met us and carried us off towards the mountains, all the women of the villages running out to see us pass.

Averescu led us up to a height opposite the position occupied by our Roumanians and the Germans in sight of Targu Ocna, which the enemy is trying to take and continually bombarding. We went by motor as far as we could, then we got on to horses and rode to the top of the hill. From here the panorama was beautiful, and the positions lay before us uncannily near. There was no great bombardment going on, only intermittent cannonading from both sides. General Vaitoianu joined our party and both generals together explained to me the positions and also their hopes of resistance, perhaps even of attack!

The heat was great, but the view really glorious, and it was a deep emotion for me to be so near those places where our brave soldiers are offering up their lives to form a living barrier between these regions that still belong to us and the invading foe. I felt more than ever how deeply I loved every inch of this land!

After having thoroughly understood all that the generals had to explain I left my height for lower altitudes, where a company of "Vânătorii" de Munte" (chasseurs) were gathered together waiting to receive decorations for their brave conduct. Averescu asked me to decorate them instead of doing so himself, which of course I did with great pleasure. He knew this would mean more to them than anything else. Dear brave little soldiers, with their helmets and sunburnt faces, they are a goodly sight to see, and each man beamed upon me in turn, glad to have me in their midst, telling me the name of the village whence he came. The name of many a dear place was pronounced, and our eyes understood each other in our mutual longing for regions that are ours no more, and yet a new confidence has been born lately because of the bravery of our soldiers, so heroically defending what still remains to us.

It was an hour full of emotion when we very keenly felt that strong love which now binds us together. The site was lovely, the sky blue, innumerable flowers starred the meadows, and the boom of the cannons rolled round the mountains beyond.

This ceremony concluded, we hurried off by motor back to our train stationed beyond Onești, where Elisabetta had remained, unable, because of her knee, to take part in this excursion. We found her not at all well, so I left Lise with her and, quickly discarding my none too elegant riding clothes, started off with Averescu and Ballif to a distant village where the first division had invited me to dinner.

We arrived there at nightfall and I was solemnly led amidst thundering cheers to a large meadow where huge tables had been spread, one for me and the officers and a little farther down for all the troops. On this night of nights we all wanted to be together.

I first walked all round the field to greet the men whilst they waved their helmets in the air, cheering for all they were worth.

It was quite dark except for two reflectors which cast a blinding light into my eyes. Probably I could be clearly seen by my troops, but I could only see them in outline

and the flashing lights on their metal helmets as they waved them about over their heads.

It was a weird and impressive sight, and I was full of emotion, elated and yet sad. So many were no more there to greet me: this division alone has had terrible losses, and I was therefore specially eager to be with them before they went under fire again. General Stratilescu received me as commander of the division.

I could not remain very long, as I was due back in my train at a certain hour, but Averescu made a touching speech; it happened to be exactly a year ago that, at that same hour, war was declared and that our troops crossed the Carpathians! Already a year! And how much we have all of us learned and suffered in this one year!

And to-day it is an almost sacred pride to me that all our troops want to have me in their midst, more especially when they are to be under fire. I help to keep alive the spirit of enthusiasm. My nurse's dress has become to them a symbol. As I moved all white amongst them, their reflectors singling me out, I knew that I represented the star of hope. Something which showed the way; a living, existing something every man was ready to live for, fight for, die for, because all men need an ideal, something which stands beyond, above the every-day level; I, their Queen!

There was more tremendous cheering and then, alas, I had to hurry back to the station in the starlight, over many a bumpy road accompanied by the boom of the cannon, back to my train.

Flying over the hills I saw great fiery balls the Germans were shooting into the air; I never quite understood what was the meaning of those fiery balls!

Jassy, Tuesday, August 15th/28th, 1917.

St. Maria Mare: a year since the War began. Arrived at Jassy at half-past eight, Carol also just arrived from the other front, and there was a great deal to relate on both sides, our tongues wagged without stopping. I receive innumerable touching telegrams.

Elisabetta is not well, she cannot stand such tremendous

fatigue. Ileana and Nicky met us with their white rabbits in their arms.

After breakfast had long military talks with Carol and Nando and put Averescu's case before the King.

Averescu had given me in blank his resignation as a sign that he is not working for his own personal ambition, as he believes that some imagine, begging me to hand it on to the King if I thought that the King considered it better that he should go. A rather strange act, but as a sign of friendship I accepted the paper, although I never showed it to the King. But I valiantly defended his cause, putting before the King the general's virtues and demonstrating how unfair it was to suspect him and try to put him in the shade. His officers had confidence in him, as a leader he awoke the enthusiasm of his troops, he ought therefore to be honoured instead of humiliated. I think that with my pleading I made an impression upon my husband and son.

For lunch we had that nice Commander Locker-Lampson, who came once before this winter and with whom I have been in communication ever since; several times he has helped me.

The meal over I had a long talk with him, and liked him better than ever. He has promised me more help; besides, being an M.P., he can give moral support to our cause in England. He also asked me if I would accept a sword of honour which the men of his armoured cars want to offer me, an English Princess, who has bravely done her duty as Queen of a sorely tried country. This touched me deeply.

The King has sent a very fine manifesto to his army for the beginning of the second year of war.

To our greatest regret the Duc de Luynes and Robert de Flers left us to return to France. We took a sad farewell of each other. They have been excellent friends.

Although it was always a struggle to get away from Jassy I had at last the joy of being able to go for a short time to the little wooden house which had been built for me above the large Cotofănești hospital, chief centre of our "Regina Maria" activities, behind the front.

I was enthusiastic about my wee dwelling so delightfully perched on its isolated height overlooking the Trotuş valley. It was an enchantment to be in the country after the hot town life; besides, here I was quite near the front and in daily touch with the troops, not to mention all the wounded who liked to have me amongst them.

Heavy fighting was going on on both fronts. Cotăfăneşti was a very central position and our hospital daily received hundreds of wounded. I spent my days amongst them; we were a small regiment of enthusiastic workers and, of course, my presence amongst the doctors and nurses was both a stimulant and encouragement, and from here I could also get to all the other hospitals along the valley as well as to the different troops.

Elisabetta, who was to have come with me, had had a breakdown after our last over-strenuous tournée, so Nicky and Ballif were my only followers. Nicky loved my little house as much as I did, and enthusiastically helped me to make it look as nice as possible with bright-coloured peasant rugs and pottery. Nicky was excellent company and we thoroughly enjoyed keeping house together. He was everybody's friend, knew every soul in the place and made himself useful in many ways. We revelled in our uncontrolled freedom, so different from the Jassy life. Ballif kept watch over us, maintaining severe order. He was an exacting taskmaster and never allowed me to flinch before any duty however hard or exhausting; he was always severe and critical, but I accepted his advice, having recognized that it was always good though sometimes relentless.

Many came to me whilst I was in my little house, my table was always laid for any guest who appeared at the last moment.

The generals visited me in turns and amongst others a Russian general, Eltcherninoff, who was commanding some troops which had not yet turned mutinous. He was very attentive to me and overwhelmed me with compliments in atrocious French, but he was a kindly old gentleman and I was kind to him as I was so sorry for all the well-meaning Russians of to-day.

My stay was brought to an abrupt end by bad news from

Russia; Korniloff had failed and Kerensky had declared himself "Generalissimo" and again our hearts were weary with fear.

Here are a few descriptions of my days at Cotofănești:

Cotofănești, Thursday, August 24th/September 6th, 1917.

This is my third day at Cotofănești. Each morning at about seven an enemy aeroplane flies over my house and is shot at from somewhere; it is about the first sound that I hear on awakening except sometimes the wind which sweeps very freely round my dear little house. I call it "the little house where the four winds meet."

A lovely day, less chilly than yesterday and all the same deliciously bracing. I must say the air here is excellent.

Spent my morning as usual amongst the wounded in the hospital. Many were being evacuated and I wandered about amongst them giving cigarettes and good things to eat. Our soldiers find such sweet things to say, the Roumanian peasant has a charming way of expressing himself.

I also sat about amongst the officers who were lying out in the sunshine on their stretchers and I fed them upon jam, and compôte for those who are not allowed to eat anything else. I go here, there and everywhere trying to bring a little comfort, a kind word, a kindly smile. I could describe many a touching scene, and some of them terribly sad.

They all love my visits, and if I should perchance forget one of the ten barracks it is a great disappointment.

The poor, good-looking little Russian I was so particularly looking after is dead! Poor nameless fellow, so young and so far away from his home. I saw death creeping slowly up that young body, I felt how he was getting colder and colder, I saw how his eyes were sinking more deeply into his head and how dark circles formed around them. Oh, I have seen desperately sad sights. Some of my experiences are almost too sacred to relate in words. A great strength was given me in those days; I felt this and was grateful to God.

There is one poor colonel wounded in the spine, for whom, alas, there is no hope. He lies there in stoical

resignation and will not allow his family to come, as he does not wish to be seen in such a condition. But to me he talks whilst I hold his hand for am I not "Mamma Tutulor."

One man who has been trepanned has lost all power of speech; he has a fine, intelligent face, and large dark eyes, which look at me with mute agony. All the time he holds a stump of pencil in his hand, but when he tries to write what he has to say, his hand will not obey him, yet his eyes implore me and he keeps shaking his head in a sort of dumb despair. Another, whose whole face was shot to pieces, begged me to wash his eyes for him as his lids were quite closed and stuck. I washed them for a long time and it was wonderful and touching to see the look he gave me when finally he was able to open them to look at me. They keep calling me from all sides at once and the name they give me is "Our Mother." It is all the time "Our Mother, I want this or that," and when I do not appear they keep asking where I have gone to. So of course I give them all the time I can.

General Averescu and several of the hospital people came to lunch with me and after lunch I had a long military talk with the general. Then I hurried off to Pauline Oteteleşanu's train, which was standing in the nearest station. She is a cheerful lady who laughs all the time and has more heart than sense, but I must say that I found her train in perfect order. One part of it was composed of cattle trucks, which had no communication one with the other. I climbed into each to give things to the wounded, with the result that afterwards my knees felt very shaky as the climbing into those very high carriages is a great strain. My excellent Pauline is absolutely fearless but she suffers from over-generosity and would like to feed the whole world on the provisions in her train. I am continually replenishing her foodstuffs. She has a predilection for Russians and good cheer.

From there I motored to Caiuți where I visited my Regina Maria hospital which for the moment was half evacuated, but where nevertheless I found a good many wounded. Here Colette Plagino has worked wonderfully.

As we drove away, Jean Chrissoveloni appeared on one of his rounds. I invited him to my little house for a cup of tea, then Colette Plagino, whom I had missed at Caiuți, suddenly appeared wandering up the hill, so I called her in and we all three sat round my big table talking together, admiring the lovely view and enjoying the perfect peace of the place. Jean gave me good news of Mignon, who is working splendidly.

He is eternally on the move, never an hour in the same place, works with relentless energy and sees to everything himself; this is, I suppose, why the results are so good. But there is also a restlessness about him, full of "spleen."

For dinner came General Văleanu, whose head-quarters are in the village of Cotăfănești, and also Cella, who is tremendously enchanted to have me here. Văleanu is fat and cheerful and likes the good things of this world.

At half-past nine I went down again to the hospital and made a round of all the barracks. The pleasure it gave my wounded to see me appear at such a late hour was deeply touching. With the coming of night they had all become like little children and each one wanted a word of comfort or a kindly caress.

The pathetic joy I read in their eyes was very dear to me; I really feel at those moments as though I were the mother of an enormous family, and that each one asks something of my heart. I give and give, and in giving I feel that I have always more to give—a spring of which the waters never run dry; the more I pour out, the more flows in again.

Cotăfănești, Friday, August 25th/September 7th, 1917.

Early visit of German aeroplanes, dreadful sounds, bombardment of all sorts of guns, and finally a terrific explosion from afar, like a continued, severe bombardment of heavy guns. Our whole house trembled in the most uncanny way. Afterwards we found out that the "death birds" had thrown bombs upon an ammunition train at Adjud and that there had been a formidable explosion, which quite naturally filled the town with panic. Here the noise was bad enough, but what must it have been there!

Spent all the morning amongst the wounded, getting more and more friendly with them: some are quite good acquaintances by now.

At eleven, General Averescu came and I went through the barracks giving decorations to the wounded, which of course gave me and them immense joy. It was a busy but fruitful morning, in which from half-past nine till half-past twelve I never sat down for a moment. Averescu remained to lunch with me in my little house.

Nicky is quite at home here, adores his little room and is of course friends with great and small.

At half-past four he and I went off to Adjud where Prince Kropotkin works with his Russian unit. He lives in the station of Adjud and was nearly killed this morning by the explosion, which twice knocked him down. I also saw Captain Paris, Sœur Pucci's friend, who has been in a gas attack and whose eyes are in a dreadful state.

Major Georgescu arrived this morning from Jassy; it seems that poor Elisabetta has developed jaundice which is raging as an epidemic at Jassy.

Cotofănești, Saturday, August 26th/September 8th, 1917.

The King came just in time for breakfast, and as I had to give and receive news I got down to the hospital less early. The aeroplanes were also later this morning and less busy, consequently less noise.

I left the King and General Averescu together in my little house to pore over maps and went down to say good-bye to some of our wounded who are being evacuated. Later, the King came and I led him through the different barracks to the great joy of the wounded, as the soldiers adore him.

Lunch round my big table and then Nando and I separated, he going to visit the wounded at Săscut and I going off to Moșanoia by a beautiful road over the hills, built by the soldiers, which goes almost entirely through forests. During the winter Moșanoia was one of our principal positions; since then our line has advanced and now there are no longer many soldiers there, but those I encountered were intensely glad to see me so unexpectedly in this far-away corner.

In the middle of the forest there is a wee wooden convent ideally situated ; it is guarded by a solitary, very old monk, who tolled his little bell as I arrived. He too was very glad to see me. The convent lies under the shade of huge beech trees.

It was a lovely evening and the long drive back was quite beautiful, although part of the road is very bad as in places the soft earth has given way.

Nando and I met again for supper in my little house which I love more and more and cannot make up my mind to leave, especially as these days we are expecting military events and I must be here when they bring in the wounded.

Cotofănești, Sunday, August 27th/September 9th, 1917.

Awoke to the sound of cannons. I know they are preparing an attack on our side near Targu Ocna, so of course I am anxious. No planes this morning. Nando went off towards where they are fighting and did not come back all day, so I went down to the hospital and spent all my time with the wounded. They keep calling me from all sides believing that I can find a remedy for all their different sufferings. I spoil them in every little way I can imagine and they rejoice like children over each smallest thing. The quiet way in which they bear their pain has in it something of the sublime. In spite of the horror of it, I can remain with them for hours and hours and never have a wish to run away, but occasionally when I step out of those haunts of suffering into the glorious sunshine, I feel like stretching my arms out to the sky asking why, why, why?

Another sad sight is all the women and children who flock along my road as I pass, come to tell me about their disasters ; they are women from the invaded regions we had just taken back, which had to be re-surrendered because of the Russian failure near Cernovitz. They have quitted their homes and as they have absolutely nothing left are very difficult to help.

Carol suddenly appeared by motor bringing several people with him, who all lunched with me. He is not feeling well. Directly after lunch Jean Chrissoveloni arrived quite unexpectedly to announce to me that Mignon also has an

attack of jaundice at Ghidigeni and is feeling wretched ! Elisabetta at Jassy, Mignon at Ghidigeni and probably Carol is in for it too. And after tea, to which I had invited Cella and her *équipe*, I suddenly noticed that Nicky was looking canary yellow and was much quieter than he usually is. Jaundice ! Too bad, all my children at the same time in different places, and yet they say that jaundice is not catching !

Cella enjoyed her tea ; she is gloriously greedy, and always funny, she has a way of finding incredible comparisons. One can never be dull when Cella is anywhere about the place.

All the time we heard the cannons booming, booming !

I went back to the hospital, as one of our officers is dying, a quite young man. I sat with him for a while, my hand on his forehead. He still recognized me, but at times his mind wandered. Ignorant as I am, I felt that he was dying, and my heart was wrung with pain. When I left him I kissed him on the brow, and he struggled to free his hand from his sheets, so as to kiss mine, and said a few words to me which I could not understand, but my smile reassured him and he closed his eyes as though relieved.

After dinner when I came back he had just died, quite peacefully without a struggle, they told me, but I felt oh, so sad. He lay there quite still with a single candle burning beside his couch ; no more pain, at peace.

Nando and Carol appeared for dinner ; our military operations it seems are advancing slowly, but with advantage on our side.

Nando came down to the hospital with me afterwards so as to talk to the doctors and sisters, and I wandered all by myself through all the dusk-filled wards giving as much comfort as I could. I heard many a groan of pain, but reaped also many a touching word of gratitude.

As in a strange dream I moved endlessly amidst those wooden beds, listening to those sighs and groans and blessings ; some leaned their aching heads against my shoulder, some caught hold of my hands covering them with kisses, others like small children burst into tears, and their eyes seemed to ask for all the love and pity I could give. It was awful and yet sweet, terrible yet in a way comforting,

because as never before I feel that I belong to them all and that they knew that.

There is something ghostlike in those wards at that late hour, a single light burning in the centre, both extremities buried in shadow so that they appear to be endless, like a long dark passage through nothing but suffering, dread and pain.

Cotofănești, Monday, August 28th/September 10th, 1917.

I have the painter Stoica and Professor Panaitescu with me here; Stoica to make sketches and the Professor because he translates my writings into Roumanian. We have become great friends over this and can talk by the hour, and he encourages me very much in all my undertakings, in fact he believes in me, but is an exceedingly severe critic.

Same sort of morning in the different wards. Nicky decidedly has jaundice and lies in bed with a baby hare on one side and his dog on the other, and the two animals get on quite peacefully together. The baby hare is a perfect treasure. Nothing, however, will induce Nicky to remain in bed all day. He has made great friends with a French mechanic with the interesting name of Rigaud; they potter about together endlessly, doing all sorts of things.

I had a nice Russian general, Eltcherninoff, to lunch, a pleasant and amiable man with whom conversation was both easy and agreeable.

In the afternoon I drove with Ballif to Adjud, Ballif sitting beside me but on the very edge of the seat. At Adjud I visited a large hospital for contagious diseases, mostly typhoid, and also several barracks for the wounded. This hospital was specially recommended to me by Dr. Jean Cantacuzène, because some of the people of his laboratory are attached to it, favourite pupils of his.

In one of the largest barracks I found a dear little boy who had been wounded in the head, a child of about four, whose father is in the army, but whose mother was probably killed when the child was wounded, anyhow there was no one to claim him. His head was all bound up and there he sat, a wee morsel of humanity in his large bed between nothing but grown-ups. An adorable little fellow, who

solemnly answered all the questions I put to him. I told the doctor that I would take charge of him the moment he was well enough to be moved.

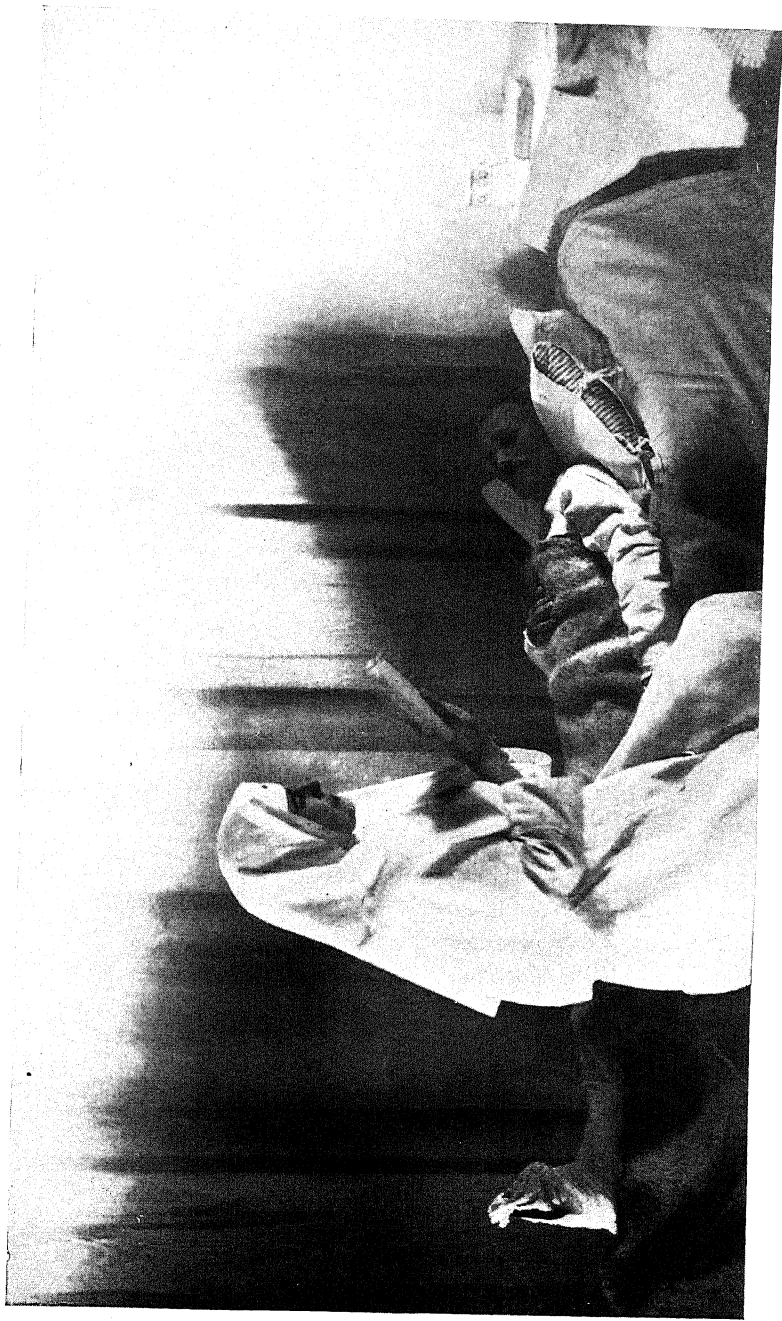
Nando, with Prince Stirbey, came to dinner, and I had also invited another Russian general whose name I do not remember.

Cotăfănești, August 29th/September 11th, 1917.

We have had bad news from Russia which makes us anxious. Kerensky wanted Korniloff to resign: Korniloff has refused, declaring that Russia is in peril and as long as it is in his power he will remain at the head of the army so as to save his country. Most of the generals have rallied round Korniloff. Tcherbacheff is on Korniloff's side and has sent a manifesto to the Russian troops here, but General Surikoff commanding the army round Galatz declares that he will remain faithful to Kerensky and the Government and not to Korniloff! This may cause fearful complications in our country, and again we see ourselves faced with a crisis of the worst kind. Here I am so far away from all talk and panic that I cannot feel anxious, but Nando and Stirbey see danger ahead and they are already beginning to fuss at the idea that I am wandering about too far from the centre; but I will not so easily let panic take possession of me and shall remain here as long as I can or go to Ghidigeni.

Carol reappeared for lunch, but he was not at all well, so we persuaded him to leave for Jassy and get through his jaundice there, as it is no good dragging about when one feels like a rag; Nicky is as yellow as a lemon but will not go to bed; he even went out fishing with Ballif and all the morning he pottered about the hospital in the company of his friend Rigaud.

When I am alone I invite the doctors and ladies working in the hospital to come up in turn for either lunch or supper. Dr. le Laurier, who is our chief, is really a splendid man and works beautifully, loved by everybody. Madame Vaitoianu and her daughters are most devoted, and Jean Duca's sister, too, is a remarkable nurse; the soldiers adore her. To-day Cella came for lunch with a charming young Frenchman, Pierre Reindre, belonging to the Regina Maria mission



READING TO A WOUNDED OFFICER IN ONE OF OUR COTOFĂNEȘTI WARDS.

who came out with the Marquis de Beaumont. Reindre is quite *homme du monde*, tall, slim, and good-looking, and one can talk on all sorts of topics with him.

In the evening more anxious news about Russia was brought to us. I should hate to have to go back to Jassy before the date we had fixed. I feel that my presence keeps enthusiasm alive and puts spirit into all those I come in contact with, be they nurses, doctors, officers or the fighting man! It is the human touch.

Cotofănești, Wednesday, August 30th/September 12th, 1917.

Usual visits amongst my wounded; this morning I gave them a feast of that white cheese the peasants are so fond of, which is a great treat as it is seldom to be had now. They like it better than anything else and say that it makes them feel as though they were at home.

After lunch I had a long talk with Panaitescu about the different books we want to bring out for the soldiers, and after another long talk with Stirbey, who came with various telegrams, I finally started off with Ballif to search for the 4th Roșiori (my regiment) which was supposed to be somewhere beyond Onești.

After a somewhat adventurous and perilous drive we arrived rather late and found George Moruzi and some of the officers, but most of the regiment is in the trenches. For the return journey we found a rather better road, because the one we came by really gave us too many emotions. But in spite of the better road we only reached home at nine, which upset me as I had been invited to dine with the people down in the hospital. Luckily Nando was also late. The soup was somewhat cold and sticky, but they were all delighted to have both the King and me at their table. Afterwards as usual I made my evening tour amongst the wounded till my feet ached.

This morning I had a great grief. I arrived just too late to decorate a man to whom I had promised a decoration; many of the others had been decorated and he had been left out and this broke his heart, so I had implored Averescu to send me an extra medal. The moment it arrived I rushed down with it, but the man had died just a quarter of an

hour before I reached his bed. This is the sort of thing one cannot bear.

The man had lost both legs and imagined that if he returned to his village with a decoration he would be looked upon as a hero instead of only a cripple. But he died before I could bring him the supreme consolation.

I pinned the much coveted medal over his heart which beat no more, and I made the sign of the cross on his forehead as his mother might have done.

Chapter XX

STRENUOUS DAYS

IT was quite a wrench to part from Cotăfănești and the freedom I enjoyed in my wooden house amongst the hills. It was hard to leave my fellow-workers, hard to tear myself away from the wounded who had become fond of me, hard to have to return to town with its stuffy air and thousand worries. Near the front everything was different, the air was purer in every way and the work keener, more enthusiastic, and politics did not sour my days.

But Jassy was clamouring for me and under the threat of fresh Russian disasters I had to return to what I termed "hard labour."

They also brought us the news that the mighty Kaiser was triumphantly promenading about the invaded part of our country; he had been to Sinaia and to Curtea de Arges where he had laid wreaths upon the tombs of old Uncle and Aunt. Nando was very much upset and remembered with a certain bitterness how old King Carol had always expected the visit of his young kinsman who, although he had been given the title of "Reise-Kaiser," had never given his old uncle this pleasure. To-day he had laid a wreath upon the old ruler's grave, after having invaded his country. It was not thus that Uncle had thought to receive his nephew. I always imagined that that imperial wreath must have lain heavily on Uncle's tomb.

During the summer I came together with men of several nationalities and many of them became real friends.

There was Nicolai of the Fusiller Marin, tall and fair, of aristocratic appearance, a great gentleman; there was also the Comte de Rochefort, Elisabetta's friend, and several French doctors such as Devaux, Championère, Veuillet, Vaudescale and others.

There were my English friends Locker-Lampson and Captain Evans of the armoured cars, who took a great interest in our suffering country and helped me as much as they could, encouraging my efforts by word and deed.

The appearance of the American Red Cross in our midst was also a happy event. We received them with enthusiasm, and Colonel Anderson, their chief, put himself entirely at my disposal to work in close contact with me. He was a charming Virginian gentleman, a little ceremonious and exceedingly chivalrous. From the first we were friends and worked in perfect and pleasant understanding.

They came with full hands and a magnificent supply of provisions of every kind, which seemed quite dazzling at this time of dearth. I took Colonel Anderson about to the hospitals and drove also far out into the country with him so that, with his own eyes, he could see how terrible was the want in the villages. He followed me patiently, and together we saw many a heartrending sight which fired our desire to help in every possible way.

The tremendous amount of material they had at their disposal enabled them to do excellent work; besides, they were magnificently practical and efficient, and went about things in the right manner. I shall never be able sufficiently to express my gratitude for all the aid they gave us at a period when we were forsaken and in the utmost distress.

Ileana was at Deleni with old Prince and Princess Ghyca, who had a lovely house near the small town of Herlău. I visited her there, spending a night with her amiable hosts.

I was amused to see how Ileana fitted into this somewhat antiquated household, where the outward world never penetrated, and where time seemed to stand still. Prince Ghyca was a *boyar* of the old type, hostile to every innovation, living an isolated existence, desiring to ignore that change could ever be.

My small daughter was treated with the utmost ceremony, and at meals was solemnly seated, according to rank, at the head of the table, an honour she accepted with perfect grace. Ileana was born with the feeling of *noblesse oblige*, and it was charming to see how gracious the child could be, gay as a bird, and full of fun, yet never forgetting her

manners when in the company of those she rightly considered her betters.

There were two granddaughters in the house, two rather shy and timorous little girls whom Ileana tried to emancipate, but with small success, and she had also Ioana Perticari with her, her closest friend, a year older than herself. The old house was surrounded by walled gardens which breathed peace and seclusion, and I was grateful that my child could be here, far from the dust and turmoil of the town.

Nicky was having a holiday at Macsut, a neighbouring country house belonging to Monsieur and Madame Polisu, who had two sons more or less of his age. "Bambino" had come along with him, and at the back of the house there was a large vineyard where the grapes were ripe. The life my son lived here was anything but ceremonious. He was outrageously spoilt by every member of the household and by their numerous guests, having a glorious time of it, indulging in a hundred restless activities! Everybody was at his beck and call, for Nicky had a way of being top-dog wherever he went. Grape-eating played a great part. Nicky, although as thin as a sprite, had a tremendous appetite. At Macsut they kept feeding him all day long.

Elisabetta was also having a short holiday at Madame Demètre Grecianu's fine old place Stâncă, which from a lonely height overlooked the Trotuş valley. I visited them all in turns when I could get away from my many obligations.

Having seen how great was the want in many of the villages, with Ballif's aid I began running canteens for hungry children in several centres. I also clothed them with the clothes made in the working-room of my own house over which Miss Fifield, a brave Englishwoman I had known for years, presided with energy, order and efficiency.

Mr. and Mrs. Rattigan, the British First Secretary and his wife, came to take leave of us. He had for months been suffering from a very bad knee. Mrs. Rattigan was a very lovely woman, tall and fair. I was glad they were able to get off before our situation became still worse.

We were continually prepared for every eventuality,

although these summer months had allowed us breathing space and our military resistance had made our spirits rise.

Jassy, Tuesday, September 12th/25th, 1917.

A busy morning, but I did not go out. At eleven received part of the American Mission and deputies from each of my societies, as I wished to bring them together so as to see in which way the Americans can give the most practical help. There was an atmosphere of good understanding and I think that the coming of this fine mission will help us enormously.

There was a lunch at the King's house for the Americans, a very hearty atmosphere with any amount of goodwill on all sides.

Colonel Anderson, a Virginian, the head of the mission, is a charming man, very gentlemanly and pleasant to deal with.

At six o'clock we all met again at Maruka's house where Enescu played to us most beautifully, and here again we all fraternized and were amiable to each other.

Jassy, Thursday, September 21st/October 4th, 1917.

A busy morning at home, writing, seeing my usual round of people in connexion with my different works, which continue to grow according to need. Everything is so complicated, as no material is to be found anywhere, no food to be bought in large quantities; in fact nothing is to be had *in* the country, and in Russia everything is becoming impossibly expensive, and things promised from other countries never reach us because of the disorder on the Russian railways.

One has to be armed with angelic patience, which has to resist every disappointment; but when actually something does arrive, or is to be found, the delight is great, it seems almost too good to be true. Oh, one learns many a lesson!

At twelve I went down with Madame Mavrodi to the station *triage* to see a lot of children who had arrived from different parts of the country and who are to be sent to the several convents. I found much noise and confusion, but also a lot of work going on. Olga Sturdza is at the

head of the orphan organization, and Hélène Perticari helps her. Hélène always feels everything very intensely, whilst Olga remains calm; the contrast between the two is interesting to watch.

I distributed sweets amongst all the children, who had just come from their baths, and were wandering about in thick coats we had made for them, like a flock of irresponsible little sheep. Poor Olga looked lost amidst the crowd and more ready to weep than the children themselves, but Hélène, always masterful, was in her element.

Madame Popp of the *triage* was calm and businesslike, well *à la hauteur* of her work; a kind smile never leaves her face; she is an admirable worker and no situation, however perplexing or complicated, dismays her.

Madame Popp has been invaluable to me. When we started clearing up the station *trriage* she volunteered to take over the whole thing. It was by far the most dangerous post, but she never thought of the danger and, with her husband, set about clearing everything up and organizing a really systematic plan which gave excellent results. Madame Popp is a Frenchwoman by birth, but she has become a wonderful Roumanian; I shall never be able to express all my gratitude to her. Dr. Popp is a great friend of Carol's.

On coming home I received Colonel Anderson, who came to report all he has decided since our last talk; he, too, feels the despair of not being able to get the things we need. He is certainly learning that we are not on a bed of roses.

Having found great misery in many of the villages I drove through, I have started a private little organization which is to be run entirely by Ballif and his faithful satellite Georgescu ("little Georgie") to feed the most needy. To-day I drove to see my first little canteen, which has been entirely set on foot in three days. "Little Georgie" has worked like mad, and when I arrived I found the children all cleaned up and ready for their first repast. We have found a nice little house and a trustworthy old woman who is to do the cooking. We have a quite decent storeroom and we are going to feed the children three times a day.

I shall try to organize little canteens of this sort in as many villages as we can before the winter begins.

Nando is rather depressed to-day as our situation with the Russians becomes daily more unbearably difficult, so that despair fills one's heart. I endeavour with all my might to keep up everybody's spirits and to fire or keep alive their enthusiasm; it is hard work. I ought to be several people in one!

Jassy, Friday, September 22nd/October 5th, 1917.

Spent most of my morning with Colonel Anderson in the poorer hospitals giving American cigarettes to the patients. At half-past eleven received Lady Decies, who has been working with the Scottish ladies for the Serbians and is now going to our forlorn little town of Dorohoi; a nice kindly woman, full of heart and energy. After lunch, General Steinbock, of the Russian Red Cross, came with a *sistrizxa* and a Cossack to bring me a poor little orphan boy they had picked up somewhere in the forest, whom they had looked after and of whom I am now going to take charge.

The Cossack was carrying the little boy, a child of about five years old, in his arms; he belonged to the old type of Russian soldier, the right-thinking sort. He had expressed the desire to kiss the Queen's hand and to give over the child himself, also one thousand five hundred francs he had collected for the little orphan. It was really comforting to meet a loyal Russian again, such as there used to be in olden days. The child was in despair at parting with his friend the Cossack. I must say I was very much touched.

At half-past twelve I received Mr. Mills of the American Associated Press and had a long talk with him, telling him about the actual and past situation of Roumania and expressing my gratitude towards America for having sent this fine mission in which we have great faith.

To-morrow I am taking Colonel Anderson to visit some of our centres.

Jassy-Piatra, Saturday, September 23rd/October 6th, 1917.

Slept pretty well in the train. Had breakfast with Madame Mavrodi and Colonel Anderson, who offered me a beautiful Cossack dagger someone had given him on his way through Siberia.

At nine we got out at Piatra, received by General Averescu, and drove from one hospital to another seeing as much as we could before half-past ten when I was expected at the sanatorium Averescu has organized.

There I was received with many honours and much cheering by officers and doctors of different nationalities. General Averescu led me to a small bright-coloured carpet in the middle of one of the courts. Here we had to listen to a short church ceremony followed by a well-expressed speech of the general's. Everything was extremely well done and with the perfect order characteristic of Averescu.

In one of the barracks we were shown different objects made by the convalescents, and here no end of people were presented to me; I made myself amiable all round in several languages, whilst they all pressed in upon me.

Before lunch, Lise Soutzo took us up to her little house, which is too nice, everything so pretty with a background of trees turning yellow and red. I was quite particularly enchanted with the piece of rough peasant linen, dyed orange, which was spread over her bed; it is just the sort of colour I delight in, and was in charming contrast with the absolutely bare, white walls. Lise affects on purpose no sort of decoration or comfort in this simple place; but the concession of the orange stuff had all the same been made. I am strangely attracted to that bright orange colour.

Lunch was spread in a garden beyond the sanatorium beneath several huge walnut trees. In a large square all round our own table, the tables for the convalescent officers and soldiers had been laid. The lunch lasted less long than I feared, and afterwards the soldiers danced their national dances, and then several artists who were amongst the convalescents recited patriotic, and also some comic, verses. I then gave cigarettes to every one of the two thousand convalescents, who passed before me one by one, which finally made my arm ache.

Then off we drove amidst much cheering to visit the French officers and doctors at their rest home. Here I found our friend Ferreyrolles, and from there on to the huge hospital for infectious diseases, where I seemed to wander endlessly amongst one thousand eight hundred beds.

Colonel Anderson followed me faithfully wherever I went, evidently pleased to be with me, but slightly astounded at the arduousness of a "Queen's day," which he thought fatiguing to the degree of exhaustion.

This strenuous round was followed by a visit to old Madame Bogdan, one of the grandees of Piatra, who had always wished me to come and see her in her delightful old Roumanian house, somewhat beyond the town. It certainly is a delightful habitation, and I was received with evident joy and excitement, and given an excellent tea, so plentiful that it was more like a supper. Colonel Anderson sat beside me and was full of talk, also a little inclined to become poetical about the roses on the table, etc. I have seldom met anybody more polite, but he certainly is dumbfounded at what a single royal woman can do in a day. He kept sighing his dismay and admiration.

After much pleasant conversation and a courteous exchange of amiabilities, we left the kindly old lady, our motor laden with every sort of product from the gardens, kitchen and farm, and drove over many hills and through autumn tinted woods to the place of Prince Caragea, where the young lady was keen to show me a small hospital that she had arranged in their village. Although the hospital was not large, her effort had been most laudable and I congratulated her very warmly. She then insisted upon taking us up to the house of her parents-in-law, where we were again supposed to partake of much food for which I had no space. It was already dark by the time we drove off; a long, very long drive through the night beneath the stars, a lovely, soft night full of charm. We drove, and drove and drove; I ought to have been tired but I was not, although to say the least it had been a long and strenuous day. We finally reached Jassy at midnight. Madame Mavrodi slept most of the way, but Colonel Anderson quoted poetry and spoke to me of the stars. . . .

Jassy, Sunday, September 24th/October 7th, 1917.

Up early as usual and very busy in spite of my tiring day yesterday. No end of audiences, ending with St.-Aulaire, who brought me *la médaille des Epidémies* in gold, especially

stamped for me with my name on the back. We had a long talk about our political situation, about Russia and the difficult position of Roumania, and we agreed that the outlook was gloomy. St.-Aulaire is an exceedingly pleasant man; his speech is very caustic, but he is so amiable it sometimes disconcerts me. I feel I cannot always be as drastic with him as I would like to be, he is too polite, which takes the wind out of my sails.

The rest of the day was given up to trying to settle differences between touchy people, which I consider more fatiguing than visiting one thousand eight hundred wounded. My strenuous yesterday gave me no headache, but all this talk certainly did. Why must people quarrel even in time of stress and disaster?

In the second week of October I was interrupted in my activities by a touch of appendicitis which took me quite suddenly during an audience I was giving to Professor Panaitescu. The pain was excruciating, but did not become worse. It obliged me, however, to keep to my bed for a time, which filled me with exasperation. I could not bear to have to give up because of my health; that my body should play me false at a moment when I needed all my strength seemed too unfair.

I had meant to be off again to Cotăfănești but had to change my plans. Although in bed, I received many people and continued to direct my different charitable works. I was in close touch with the American Red Cross and, together with a very charming Dr. Perkins, elaborated a vast scheme for helping also the civil population. But I was feeling weak and suffered from headaches. I found it more fatiguing to work in bed; as I could not get up and go away I was at the mercy of others and had patiently to submit to their lengthy visits.

Mignon had a fresh relapse of jaundice, and on October 27th we had the news of a great Italian defeat; it was said that the Germans had taken sixty thousand prisoners! What next?

Jassy, Monday, October 9th/22nd, 1917.

This is my eighth day in bed. Much brain work and a great deal of headache, but a little more food allowed. I think my pain is gone, but I am still to remain a few days in bed for the sake of prudence.

In the morning, a long conference with Professor Panaitescu, the painter Stoica, General Gavanescu, Kirilianu (the King's librarian) and Ballif, so as to talk over my Christmas calendar for our soldiers! I hope we shall succeed in making something nice.

All day increasing headache, which is a trial, as I cannot keep my brain still, it must work. Great discussions and many lists brought to me because of the decorations to be given on my birthday. I do not mind headaches, as long as I can obtain the decorations I feel must be given. They are often so slow about giving necessary decorations, which means for me much hard labour.

This evening Nando gave a dinner to important people to meet Professor Masaryk, chief of the Czech separatist movement. He has come to consult with our Government and our Roumanian National Party of Austria-Hungary about organizing a congress of all nationalities of the Dual Monarchy now struggling for their independence.

Jassy, Wednesday, October 11th/24th, 1917.

I am still in bed, but am decidedly better and to-morrow they will have to let me get up for a little; now that I am allowed scraps of food, I shall be able to stand it. Both my doctors have been desperately severe; I suppose they were right, so as to prevent any fear of a relapse.

I received Carol's Vartejanu, whose brother had been so badly wounded in the battle of Mărășești and whom I had visited at Tecuci this summer. Alas, he has died of his wounds, and his brother has just come from his funeral. He is very sad. I asked him a lot about his feelings during battle. He used to be a rather flighty young man, but looking death in the face has made him much more serious; although his comrades have fallen at his side in great numbers, he himself has never even been scratched; how strange is Fate!

I then received our War Minister, General Jancovescu, who has just come back from Russia and had many interesting things to relate. Although everything there is in a terrible state he all the same came back with the feeling that at heart the Russians were good fellows. His impression of Kerensky is that he is a farceur hanging on to power simply because for the moment there is no one else strong enough to take it from him.

General Barter continues to be an excellent friend and does all he can to uphold our Roumanian cause, whilst Sir George Buchanan remains inexplicably hostile and unfair towards our brave and hard-tried little country. There is no fairness in his heart towards us, there never was; not even formerly in days of peace.

Although he was an intimate friend of Ducky's, he was amongst the first to forsake her when her dark hour came, whilst Ducky remains eternally grateful to Diamandi who, in spite of personal danger, behaved in those days like a brick. She even mentioned this when she wrote to Mamma.

Barbo Stirbey appeared with the news of a French victory. I also had the pleasure of receiving a magnificent donation for my poor and wounded from the Americans in Paris; this comes to me at the most propitious moment.

Jassy, Monday, October 16th/29th, 1917.

My forty-second birthday! My second war birthday! I am now an exile from our old home, but thank God not yet from our own land; it may still come, but I must have "a heart for any fate"; our fate for the moment is hard and dangerous, yet nothing is comparable in horror to those dreadful days of last year when Mircea was dying! He nearly died just that day and I remember a nightmare drive into town to the hospital where they gave me flowers, flowers, a glorious quantity of chrysanthemums, and all the time I was afraid that my Mircea would die before I could get back, so afraid!

Now I am far from Bucarest, from Cotroceni, from Sinaia, from all that was ours, but especially I am far from Mircea's grave.

To-day I got up for breakfast, put on white and let my-

self be congratulated by big and small and spoke to no one about what was in my heart ; if I had wept to-day, it would have been disastrous because I know that then everything would have made me weep. It was better to behave as though I did not remember . . . did not remember !

The presents I received were of a strange kind. Ileana brought me four ducks, my elder children gave me a huge pig ! All this for my canteens in the villages. Nando gave me money to use for my poor, other people also brought me money : Colonel Rossetti, Woodfield, Miss Milne, Mlle. Ventura ; the latter actually gave me seven thousand francs which she had earned at the theatre. And all the poor little flowers of Jassy were brought to me, such meagre, sad little flowers, the last blooms of the year.

At twelve I received the Government. At one we had a big lunch in the King's house for our military and civil household. Everybody had put on their best clothes, even I had made efforts to look smart and my old maid Elise had made me a grey velvet dress trimmed with chinchilla, pre-war provisions ! Good food was served, of which I partook most sparingly. Prince Stirbey, as head of our household, made a charming speech, touching upon past events, which brought the tears, which had all the time been so near, to my eyes.

At three we had a long ceremony, decorating with the Regina Maria Cross all the ladies, nurses and orderlies who had faithfully worked in the hospitals. Great pleasure on all sides and a weight was lifted off my heart as at last I was able to obtain recompense for much good work done by my collaborators. Tea, wine and biscuits were served, and we moved about amongst our guests talking to them all in turn ; I think there were about a hundred and fifty.

Finally I was very tired, being still weak from two weeks in bed.

Jassy, October 20th/November 2nd (All Souls), 1917.

Mircea's death-day.

It is a year to-day ! A year ! All the agony of it wells up in my heart anew, all the silently borne sorrow I carry with me everywhere, and so seldom speak of, cannot, must

not speak of if I want to remain calm. I always have the feeling that we must not inflict our own grief upon others, I am also morbidly afraid of calling forth any superficial manifestation of sympathy.

And he lies over there all alone and probably no one will be allowed to lay flowers on his grave to-day. Poor little grave, it has not even a name on it yet. I know it matters little to the one who lies within, but it matters to me bitterly—bitterly!

Dear little Mircea, his passage on earth was short, no one knew what he was going to be, whither our love would have led him. Mircea died as a bud. The good and the evil within him died with him, and there remains unsolved the secret of what he might have been. I had put so much hope in Mircea, my little boy.

At eleven there was requiem for him; they sang beautifully and I wept, thinking of the lonely little grave left in the old home.

A mournful day and all the time I was afraid that anyone would speak to me about him. I know that everyone was in sympathy with me, but sometimes it is better to be dumb, wordless. . . .

At three I had a meeting of the Regina Maria committee, at four, Dr. Massar, at half-past four, my friend Anderson with two Russian officers who have come to offer their help to the American Red Cross in Roumania, with all their newly arrived motor-cars not yet in use. One of the Russians is half-American and talks perfect English, and he is in despair about the state of things in Russia, but as he cannot bear to be idle he would like to continue his work here, using some of the Red Cross provisions which are being wasted in Russia. It sounds a good arrangement and Anderson seemed very pleased.

At half-past seven Dr. Jean Cantacuzène came to talk to me about different medical, sanitary and Red Cross questions, also about the Regina Maria ambulances which he wants to concentrate.

I took him to see Mignon, who cannot get fit, but he thinks that all the same she is on the mend now.

Dined in bed, as I am still idiotically tired. To-morrow

night Elisabetta and I are leaving for Cotăfănești. I am taking dear old Sœur Pucci with me to give her a well-earned rest, and also little Madame Vaudescale, Vartejanu's sister who married a French doctor with an English face.

Cotăfănești, Monday, October 23rd/November 5th, 1917.

Our third day here.

Quite a military day. Started off at ten with Elisabetta and Ballif for Onești, where we were received by General Vaitoianu. There, on a field, I decorated the soldiers and officers of the 24th Regiment, which has been resting for a fortnight and is now going back to the trenches. Tremendous enthusiasm, and again I realized that these visits to the front are an excellent thing. My presence fires the men to new effort, fills them with fresh enthusiasm.

We lunched in a wooden barracks and the colonel of the regiment, Bădescu, made a speech with extraordinary poetical fluency: he is intensely loyal and could hardly contain his joy about our visit. He has, it seems, been very brave. He told me it mightily encourages his soldiers when I come to see them before they go under fire.

I also visited my Regina Maria hospital and the enormous churchyard General Vaitoianu has specially looked after. Hundreds and hundreds of graves, alas, but beautifully arranged beneath the fruit trees of a large orchard just beyond the church.

Hurrying back to Cotăfănești I dropped Elisabetta there, changed as quickly as I could into riding clothes and off again with Ballif towards a mountain where General Vaitoianu has arranged that I should visit the first line trenches. The general allows me to do this to-day because it is very foggy, which makes it less risky.

We drove past Onești, through the almost entirely destroyed Targu Ocna, out beyond to a village where horses had been got ready for us; but Colonel Rujinski, who met us here, persuaded us that we could get almost to the top of the mountain in the motor. We followed his advice and the first thing we did was to stick in the mud, were pulled out and then nearly upset down a slippery bank, but after this with a certain amount of emotion at sharp turnings on

the edge of precipitous inclines, our motor brought us nearly to the top of the mountain.

Here we found ourselves enveloped in mist, and we walked a good distance uphill through dripping autumn fogs, along a road which had been torn up by big shells.

After a certain time we left the road and crept into the trenches, a whole labyrinth of trenches, slippery underfoot and difficult going, continually up and down. Not being in good condition after my two weeks in bed, I found it quite an exertion, to which my knees and lungs rather objected.

It was a pleasure to witness the soldiers' astonished delight when they saw me. I penetrated into each little dug-out to give them cigarettes and kind words. I was received with such deep joy that I was much touched. All conversation had of course to be in whispers because the enemy was so very near.

So that I should realize how close we were to the enemy's trenches, an officer began a German conversation from our trench to the one opposite and he was answered in German. It was quite a friendly little talk, the German asking for bread, and yet if one or the other had raised his head, he would have immediately been shot at.

Night was coming on and we began picking our way through the growing dusk back towards the road. Everywhere the soldiers had lit fires in their dug-outs and were cooking their supper. I talked to them, had some of their soup, sat down in their little holes to rest and gave them cigarettes, and we smoked awhile together.

The pleasure we felt was mutual, but it was mixed with an underlying feeling of excitement because I had penetrated so near the heart of modern warfare, and of course the soldiers did not expect to see their Queen in the trenches ! Everywhere along the trenches, laid out in little niches in the earth, were hand grenades and cartridges of different kinds. I even pushed my way into the farthest outposts where the sentries stand, their guns pointed towards the enemy, and do not turn round even when spoken to ; I laid my little packets of cigarettes down beside their guns.

And yet this evening everything was so still, it hardly

seemed possible that here I was in the trenches where the real fighting takes place. One shot was fired somewhere, that was all I heard.

It was night by the time we left the trenches and we picked our way carefully over the shelled road to where we had left our motors and then began a somewhat perilous descent upon the steep, sticky, twisting road. This visit to my troops in their trenches was a great experience for me and an almost holy joy to them. The Roumanian peasant uses charming language. As I sat smoking with them in their dug-outs they told me in poetical words what my name meant to them and how the sight of me filled them with new energy and a dogged desire to hold fast to the last man.

I felt a lump rising in my throat and thanked God in my heart for being allowed to hear my own men say such words. It is a recompense for every effort and every sacrifice.

I did not reach Cotăfănești till half-past nine, and I was expected to sup with the doctors and ladies down in the hospital. They were, however, delighted to have me, better late than never; the supper was cheerful and Cella as usual exceedingly funny. At the end our good doctor le Laurier actually allowed himself to be induced to sing some comic verses he had composed upon Cotăfănești to the music of the Marseillaise, everybody joining in with the chorus.

I was very tired but I did my best to take part in the fun.

Cotăfănești, Wednesday, October 25th/November 7th, 1917.

This morning Minister Alecco Constantinescu visited me at the hospital; he was so fat and round in his thick overcoat that he made the wounded smile, for I am sorry to say that our friend Alecco has a way of walking which irreverently reminds me of Uncle Bertie, H.M. King Edward VII.

Dr. Ellis, the American writer, critic and publisher, also appeared again. I showed him all round; he is a most pleasant, keen and agreeable man, especially interested in social and religious questions, and has been travelling about the wilder parts of Europe, principally in Russia, to collect information and impressions. His impression of Russia is a ghastly one, alas!

It was a glorious day full of magnificent sunshine, golden light and such a dark blue sky. We simply revelled in its beauty.

I kept the Minister, our American friend, Sylvia Vaitoianu and an officer for lunch. Interesting talk upon many subjects. The news from Italy and Russia is, alas, most alarming. I discussed it with Constantinescu, who is one of our cleverest Liberals, and exceedingly efficient on all occasions.

Directly after lunch I started off with Dr. Ellis and Ballif to the far-off village of Păunești, which is the centre of General Petala's division, and where he is helping me to make a Mircea canteen for the orphans and poor children.

All the way during my drive I was followed by an enemy aeroplane; finally some of our own rose into the air and circled about over our heads so as to protect us. It is astonishing how they know when I drive out. This constant anxiety turns Ballif's hair grey, but I have become quite accustomed to the nasty buzzing things. I have not the feeling that they want to kill me, but only to know where I go.

At Păunești I was given a wonderful and quite unexpected reception, the Russian, Roumanian and Transylvanian troops all lined up. I got out of my motor and walked proudly down their ranks and was much cheered; the Russians were as excited and pleased as my own soldiers. I am certainly each time fully recompensed for my exertions!

Then according to local custom I stood on a very bright, many-coloured carpet in the middle of Păunești's most imposing square, and all the troops marched past me.

This was followed by a visit to the poor children in the Mircea canteen, where they were given tea and I divided amongst them the good things I had brought. From there I proceeded in solemn procession through the village, followed by all sorts of people who seemed to sprout out of the ground under my feet, to the hospital where I distributed tobacco and sweets to the sick and wounded. Although the air was keenly fresh the sun shone gloriously, and I could go about without a coat.

In the same order of procession I was solemnly marched

back through the village, my followers treading on my heels, to a large house where a welcome cup of tea was offered me in the company of Roumanian, Russian and French officers, who all vied with each other in being amiable and attentive, so much so that finally carried away by their enthusiasm, I gave them all signed photographs of myself; upon which I was asked to stand out on the steps of the house to receive different deputations of soldiers, Russians and Transylvanians, who offered me money they had collected for my orphans. Loyal speeches were uttered and verses composed by General Petala's son were recited in my honour by a young and eager officer. There were even some unfortunate little children who had also to recite verses and to offer flowers, whilst all the troops stood around breaking continually into cheers, drowning their shrill small voices.

The atmosphere was vibrant with goodwill and happy excitement and the crowd crushed round me and took part in everything, in good Roumanian fashion, almost treading on my toes in their eagerness to have a good look at me; nor was I allowed to leave without having visited another hospital and some military baths of which they were very proud. All along the way I was stopped by the peasants, who wanted to talk to me, voice their complaints, shower blessings on my head, or kiss my hands.

A second visit to the canteen, reviewing the children who were being fed upon the rich, white cheese every peasant adores. I hung a little cross round the neck of each child and was finally allowed to get into my motor, and to drive off amidst the frantic cheering of all the troops, including the Russians, the peasant population joining in with all their might. By this time it was dark and the drive home was very cold but animated, as Dr. Ellis all the time kept up a flow of talk and we made a plan about how he could best help us in more ways than one. He is also very interested in my writings.

We reached home at about eight o'clock; I changed my clothes, warmed myself a bit and then gave supper to all my party including Dr. Ellis and the two officers attached to him; one of these, Lascar, speaks perfect English. After

supper more discussions, our plans taking shape, and finally to bed dead tired and aching in every limb.

Cotofănești, Thursday, October 26th/November 8th, 1917.

Awoke to a wonderful morning of sunshine. So as to keep off my legs for a little and to give my aching body a chance, I remained in bed till eleven o'clock, breakfasting in my own room but with my door wide open into the dining-room which was a blaze of sunshine, so that I could talk to the others whilst they were eating round my big table. Dr. Ellis had come early to fetch some papers, so he too was invited to partake of the meal. Sœur Pucci sat over the coffee she so much enjoys and the sun lay bright upon her snow-white cornette and upon the orange Regina Maria ribbon she wore round her neck; it also lay upon the bowl of chrysanthemums in the middle of the table and upon the wooden walls, which became quite golden. The whole room was flooded with sunshine, real Roumanian sunshine. I am so happy that I can give these few days' rest in pleasant surroundings to my dear old nun; she so seldom gets a holiday, her life is all work and sacrifice.

From my bed I could talk to my guests, but Dr. Ellis only remained a short time, so as to conclude our business, and then dashed off for some military inspections, and I remained with Sœur Pucci and had a heart-to-heart talk with her during which all of a sudden I was able to speak about Mircea. This is always a relief to me, as mostly I carry about that pain deeply and dumbly buried in my heart.

A short visit to the hospital and then General Averescu came to lunch. The news from Russia is very disquieting. I received a cipher telegram from Jassy sent by Prince Stirbey, but Ballif had forgotten his dictionary and had to send for it, so it was only at luncheon-time that I received the desperate and despairing news, news that may mean anything: that the Revolution has taken a turn in favour of the Maximalists. The Minister of War has resigned, giving as reason that the Naval Governor is treating for peace. The Minister of War has, therefore, put himself at the head of the Maximalists and has arrested the Government. Kerensky and Tereshenko are supposed to have fled. For the

moment it is not to be fathomed what an effect this will have upon Roumania, but Tcherbacheff is anxious and has asked for Roumanian troops to be sure against all eventualities, and other Russian commanders have expressed the same desire!

Extraordinary state of affairs! And in conclusion, of course, I am told that I ought to come back to Jassy!

Naturally this was a shock, as it is very disagreeable to dismantle your house at a moment's notice and to rush off. With hurry and bustle we might pack up everything this evening and dash off after dinner, but beside the absurdity of such a precipitate departure, I had promised to go and visit General Moșoiu and his division to-morrow, a specially brave division, and they have made great preparations to receive me. As all the troops know that I am coming, the disappointment would be great. So after a short time of hateful hesitation I decided I would not give up my plans for to-morrow.

I also had a long talk with General Averescu, and then Dr. Reverchon came to me to talk about our Regina Maria organization; he is a clever, business-like little man.

The rest of the afternoon and the evening was spent in the hospital amongst the wounded and my fellow-workers; every hour has become precious and I hate to have to be torn from them, as this is probably the last time I shall be able to come here this year. I also supped down at the hospital *popotte* with all the doctors and sisters. Ballif was able to get into communication with Prince Stirbey at Jassy. The news is certainly bad, so I have decided to leave to-morrow evening after my military inspection and to be at Jassy by Saturday morning. Although it will be dreadfully hard to leave this dear little house, I myself feel that I had better go back to the King. Of course we have had already so many forms of horror and terror that one gets hardened to bad news, we never expect good news any more, and if good news does come it is sure to be immediately drowned by the announcement of some disaster.

I am fond of this little house, so far from all noise, so simple, and my life uncomplicated by court surroundings and politics.

I lie in my bed looking out upon the view through my glass door, and remember all the days I have spent here, and I seem to listen for the footsteps which one after another have climbed my little stairs ; the footsteps of many coming to ask my help. . . .

What is coming next, what is our fate to be, what new sorrow, what new danger shall we have to face?

Cotofănești, Friday, October 27th/November 9th, 1917.

An entirely military day in the hills amongst the troops, what I call a successful day, a day worth living.

An early departure with Ballif, Elisabetta still unable to stand a strenuous day. But before really starting I first went up to the Cotofănești cemetery which I have had arranged. We have set up a large cross in the centre for which I made the design. The churchyard lies so beautifully high up above the Trotuș, and now the colouring is marvellous, the trees all amber, copper and red against a hazy blue-grey background of hills, the river flowing far down beneath. I would like to turn this spot into a flower garden for the dead.

Then off we went, Ballif and I, towards Pralea. Half-way we were greeted by round and portly General Moșoiu, whom as yet I had never met. We immediately made friends, with a rapidity justified by the man's extraordinary *joie de vivre* and overflowing, bouncing, good-humoured energy and belief in all things good.

This rubicund, military gentleman inspires one with the feeling that all things on earth are not only possible but even pleasant.

We drove along a beautiful new road up the hills through the forest, built by Moșoiu's troops. This heavy but genial gentleman sat beside me in my Rolls-Royce which groaned under his weight, and more than once we remained sticking, upon which he would jump out of the motor with extraordinary alacrity, full of excuses for the mud which had formed in the night because of the dripping mist, and he himself shoved the motor from behind. His size and the number of stones he weighed in nowise impeded his activities.

Moşoiu has a real genius for organization and forethought. A great eater himself, he has looked after the food for his troops in a marvellous way. No division is so splendidly cared for, he has everything in abundance and has laid in stores for man and beast for at least six months ahead.

Having taken some German trenches he studied the enemy's way of making things comfortable, and has set himself out to outdo them, and has built whole little hidden villages of neat, comfortable, little houses half under ground.

When we arrived at his post of command, I was taken to a delightful little house where a small room had been prepared for me with a marvellous bed which the soldiers had built specially for me, all in different coloured tree bark and with a crown on the top, which induced me to promise to come back again and sleep in this bed if I could get away. Of course I had to inspect the whole camp, the officers were presented to me and then we drove off to a battery of guns somewhere beyond. The weather, which had been very misty, had quite cleared and the view was lovely. Here I had to be shown how cleverly the guns were hidden and all four of them were fired in my honour, a sort of little greeting to the Boches, because I, their Queen, was in the midst of her soldiers; not an inoffensive royal salute, but a real war salute with a deadly message which made me shudder in spite of the enthusiasm shown by my guides. I was taken in hand by an energetic artillery lieutenant, Georges Lupu, who marched me about everywhere, showing me how they lived and how everything had been organized for their comfort and health. Up and down we climbed, looking at the dwellings, at the baths, and I was asked to speak through the telephone with the first trenches and received a "să trăiți, Majestate" (long live Your Majesty) as answer. Everything was in perfect order and done with the new war art which has been inspired by extraordinary circumstances.

Thence back again to Moşoiu's neat little, hidden village where I partook of excellent, but too plentiful food whilst soldier "Lautars" (gipsy minstrels) played, and different

artists amongst the officers and soldiers sang or recited, for Moşoiu believes in good cheer on the front.

General Moşoiu sat opposite me enjoying his own food like a kindly ogre, enjoying also his own work, his own hopes and revelling in the thought of all he was still planning to do, shedding around him an atmosphere of content and confidence which was pleasant to meet in these days. Here I also found Rossetti Balanescu, who this spring wrote me such a touching letter after having read my article upon Bucarest. He told me what I meant to every officer and soldier in the army.

The meal over, we started off again on a lovely road down the mountain-side, through Valea Babei to the valley of the Şuşiţa. A really beautiful road, but the ground very steep and difficult, a marvellous forest radiant with autumn colouring. This road has also been built by Moşoiu's troops and he is gloriously proud of it. Altogether he is gloriously proud of all he has done, but with good reason, because all has been done with extraordinary efficiency. At one place the general told the chauffeur to dash as quickly as possible, the road being exposed to German guns.

In the village of Câmpurile we stopped and there they gave me a demonstration of a sham battle but with real arms: cannons, guns, machine-guns and hand grenades. They had even dug trenches overnight so as to make the thing quite real; there were also machine-guns hidden in all the trees and on the roofs of the houses. The noise was absolutely infernal, and Dana, my cocker, nearly became crazy with fear. After this, exhilaratingly cheered by the troops, I drove on to another village where a plentiful and excellent tea was offered to me by my irrepressible, fat general, who presided over it with the already mentioned air of a kindly ogre, who could not only digest any food, but also a few Boches into the bargain.

Finally tearing myself away from this excellent company, I drove off and after a few miles was handed over to General Mărginianu, into whose section I had now penetrated. Here I had also to examine baths, hospitals, springs, depots, dwellings, etc., and was offered a silver image taken from the destroyed church of Măresti.

Now it was General Mărginianu who took the place beside me in the motor; it groaned less under his weight than under that of my host of this morning, and he took me to his post of command behind Moșanoia, the place in the middle of the forest where this summer I visited the dear little wooden monastery with the solitary old monk. General Mărginianu is a quite different type from General Moșoiu; one of our bravest soldiers, but more taciturn, less exuberant, also half the size of his comrade, but a great believer in his Queen.

At this post of command we again stopped and visited the whole place. Here there is also an underground village, most practically organized, but less full of imagination than Moșoiu's; each general had worked according to his special capacity. I distributed as usual much tobacco amongst the troops, the men are always greedy for cigarettes. Finally I shed my second general, Ballif took his seat beside me, and off we drove along the beautiful but endless road through the forest. The colouring was magnificent, the sun was setting and the whole forest was one blaze of dazzling, ruddy, rusty light, trees and ground a dark burnished copper, glorious indeed.

Night came on and we drove on and on over the winding, twisting, never-ending road, our lights throwing weird reflections upon the trees as we went. The road was in pretty good condition, and the night warm; at times it drizzled, but hardly enough to make me very wet, somehow one does not get very wet in a motor when one goes fast. At times we were entirely enveloped in drifts of fog.

At seven I reached home. I tidied up as quickly as possible, so as to receive Pierre Reindre, who wished to talk to me about the propaganda he is eager to start on behalf of our Regina Maria ambulances when he goes back to Paris. For dinner I had invited General Vaitoianu and the kindly ogre who had followed me as far as Cotofănești.

After dinner, although I was in a hurry to get off, I still had to receive an ardent Frenchman who came about the organization of motor ambulances throughout the whole army and wanted to find out in which way he could make contact with my Regina Maria ambulances.

He was desperately keen that we should work together, desiring therefore to put the whole organization under my protection, saying excessively amiable things to explain why he desired this. I on my side was also very amiable, but somewhat evasive in my answers, not knowing upon what authority he was talking and not knowing exactly how the new organization of which, in principle, I entirely approve, would affect my own work. I said I should be enchanted to help and put myself at the head of the whole organization if I were officially asked to do so by those in authority.

Then off we hurried to the station, where there was a loving leave-taking from all those I had worked with, also touching good-byes to all the generals, etc. It was raining and a great comfort to slip at last into bed and to stretch my tired limbs.

I love these military days ; they refresh heart and soul, but they call upon every ounce of my physical fortitude.

Chapter XXI

HOPING AGAINST HOPE

Jassy, Saturday, October 28th/November 10th, 1917.

I AM back again, back in the midst of all sorts of bad news, back to an atmosphere of discouragement and depression, back from the hills, from my dear little house and from kindly, optimistic ogres to anxious faces, politics and depressing rumours.

But in a way it is good that I should be here. Nando is going through a phase of discouragement and my more optimistic disposition, my perhaps idiotically confident nature, is all the same a shield against depression. Anyhow, I will not be beaten or feel beaten till the last shred of hope has been torn from me. Certainly we are in an impossibly odious, desperate hole, but I cannot help feeling that there *is* a way out. Only one must have the right sort of courage and abnegation. I feel this so keenly and I am so prepared for it myself, that I feel as though I must teach others to simplify their *amour propre* so as to face squarely a beastly situation, honestly without any shield of false pretences, or accusing of others.

I wish I had the tongues of angels so that I could make them all understand what I mean and what sort of courage I think we ought to have. In spite of all that has happened our politicians are *not yet ready* to sacrifice themselves for the common cause. I cannot explain what I mean, but I strongly feel it, and blush for them.

I had a busy morning talking to Nando, to Carol, to Irène Procopiu, who has returned from her long journey and has a thousand things to relate.

Then Stirbey came and we compared notes, exchanged news and sifted our ideas, fears and hopes. I had not even time to take off my hat.

Mignon is better, but not yet well; Nicky is not quite himself, and I hope he is not going to produce a new kind of malady.

After a rapid little outing with Elisabetta I sent for my friend Colonel Anderson and had a long, serious talk with him about our situation, which he considers desperate unless drastic means for adequate organization are immediately taken. I called in Prince Stirbey and we discussed the best way of putting through what *has* to be done, obliging every man to do his duty, at the same time avoiding as much as possible offending the national, and especially the governmental, susceptibilities.

Afterwards Ileana came and read to me to show me the progress she was making. Ileana is the most earnest pupil and never shuns a difficulty.

Jassy, Friday, November 3rd/16th, 1917.

Got up for breakfast although I was not feeling really well, but I had such a lot to do that I cannot rest any longer; besides, I am terribly anxious about Nicky.

Nando is hopelessly depressed and feeling very low; I am so afraid he is near a breakdown. The last Russian news has been so desperate and so ghastly for us that he says he sees the end approaching with giant strides. I try to give him courage, to prove to him that there is still hope, but I have nothing but my instinct and faith to set up against his definite bad news, so of course my arguments were scarcely convincing.

I believe that our situation really is completely awful. The Russians have been deciding to make peace, trying to force us also to do the same and if we will not, declaring that they will take the royal family prisoners as well as the Government.

I admit that this is a ghastly outlook, and yet, after all, these are only threats. Clinging to my own belief, I think it will not come to this! Certainly I have no grounds to be still hopeful, but I am, and I shall be to the end. But I understand the King's despair; the strain has been too awful, never any good news, all hopes crushed again and

again. The situation getting more and more impossible and nowhere to turn to.

Sœur Pucci and Anne Marie Vaudescale came to see me and we talked over our impressions of happy, sun-filled Cotofănești, the peace of which seems already far off. Too much lies heavily upon me to-day: the King's distress, Nicky's state of health and myself not feeling well.

In spite of all this I had to go to the theatre for a performance on behalf of the prisoners. Ventura was playing the *Marche Nuptiale*, and between the two first acts she recited a poem in prose I had written for our prisoners. There is no end to what is asked of me to-day; even to become a poet! She recited it beautifully and it awoke enormous emotions amongst the public, and immediately afterwards she made a *quête* which must have brought a good deal of money as I saw how everybody put their hands in their pockets.

Returning home rather overstrung I found Dr. Romalo exceedingly anxious about Nicky, more and more afraid that it is really going to be typhoid.

It was almost too much, too cruelly a repetition of last year's sorrows. I try to be strong but "verily sufficient unto the day is the sorrow thereof."

After a last visit to Nicky I went to bed with a heavy heart.

Jassy, Saturday, November 4th/17th, 1917.

Woke up physically better, less "painy," but Nicky's temperature immediately showed me that there was no more hope that he was not seriously ill.

Why this sadness and anxiety, why? Was it not enough! I suppose not; it is the run of ill luck that must surely one day change for the better!

Stirbey came to have a serious talk with me about our personal situation in case Russia made peace with the Germans over our heads, their intention being then to take us and our Government prisoners. A pretty nasty position, so nasty in fact as to be almost fantastic, almost comic.

He wanted us to be clear about how we should act if it came to this; what were the King's, Carol's and my in-

tentions on this subject? I voiced what I considered was the opinion of King, Queen and Crown Prince; anything rather than concluding peace with the Germans; anything else can be asked of us, but not that.

Part of our army would probably have to surrender if we were caught in a trap between so-called friends who had joined hands with the enemy over our heads, but we should all the same try to cut ourselves a way with a small armed force through Russia to a safe place. Of course it all sounds fantastic, like stories of adventure belonging to olden times. But for all that it is for this solution that I vote. No doubt we shall have to go through a country in revolution, a country badly disposed towards us, with all the risks of war, and this with a family of children to save! But the Russians have shown so little desire to fight that they would hardly send out troops to stop us if we showed that we were firmly decided to go through.

Later in the evening both the King and Carol adhered to my point of view, and looking things squarely and bravely in the face, we all three agreed that this would be what we would try to do. But of course one thing would have to be firmly stipulated: the absolute and irrevocable assurance on the part of our big Allies that they would uphold us as Sovereigns of this country wherever we might be, no matter how few Roumanians would have been able to go with us!

When put down like this, it seems an almost impossible adventure, and yet things have come to such a pitch that every eventuality has to be thought out.

Nicky is much worse to-day. He slumbers almost continually, but when I go to him he still has a cheerful word or two and he kisses me with all his might. Poor, jolly, energetic little Nicky! May God have mercy upon us.

Jassy, Sunday, November 5th/18th, 1917.

My days are full of anxiety. The situation becomes more and more desperate because of Russia and my Nicky is very ill.

All analyses of his blood give negative results, so the

wise men of science begin to doubt their senses, because, according to every sign it *is* typhoid!

Dr. Romalo came to me in his anxiety, and began speculating what it could be if it were not typhoid, "because," said he, "you are a person who can stand being told anything." So he explained to me that it might mean something infinitely worse than typhoid, something indeed so bad that I nearly fainted at the thought, something like galloping consumption!

Of course my reason refused to believe this, refused to admit it for a single moment; it is not possible, not possible! Only nowadays everything is so fantastically awful that there always remains a small impossible possibility that the worst may come to pass! Anyhow, all day long I nursed a monstrous fear in my heart which made me feel physically sick each time I thought of it.

I continued receiving people all through the morning, but kept the afternoon for myself nursing my "angoisse," unable to work. I suppose there are moments when poor human creatures must fight their inner battles and realize that they are nervously overstrung.

To-day I was in a curious condition. I felt all my strength and all my weakness, all my possibilities and all my limitations, all my enthusiasm and all my discouragement. I longed for solitude and yet solitude nearly drove me mad. What would have done me the most good would have been to ride far out over lonely places, to ride violently through wind, cloud and falling leaves. A strange state of nerves, half-exaltation and half-despair, and being the so-called strong one, none can help me, I must bear it alone.

On the whole, Nicky's day was not so bad. In the afternoon he said to me, "I am feeling almost quite comfortable," but after dinner when I went to say good night he moaned: "Now my bones are all aching." We were luckily able to get a good English nurse, Miss Moore, to look after him, and they get on well together. She has every possible war experience of the most exciting kind to relate, and it interests him. His mind is so keen, he is such a clever boy, so bursting full of life and interest in all things. We have cut his hair quite short, his face looks tiny with



REST IN A MAIZE-FIELD, TALKING TO ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS.

dark rims under his eyes, but such a dear, handsome, sharply-cut little face. One can easily imagine in what a state is faithful Denize (his tutor).

Jassy, Thursday, November 9th/22nd, 1917.

A real royal day, Carol driving Ballif and me in his motor; we started at half-past eleven a.m., and only returned at half-past twelve at night.

As Nicky's state of health did not cause me any special anxiety, I decided to inspect my far-off Mircea canteens, which "little Georgie" had organized in the poorest villages.

The first part of our drive was very slippery because it had rained in the night and it was mightily, monstrously cold because we had a bitter north wind against us.

Our first destination was Văntorî, a small and terribly poor village between Ștefanesti and Botoșani. Before we reached our destination we stopped at a small roadmender's house where we partook of a frugal repast brought with us, very glad to get under shelter for a moment; we had had illusions about the temperature but soon discovered that there was a cruel wind which did its best to get between our skin and bones. It was quite a decent little house, and well heated, which we much appreciated. We were kindly looked after by the peasant woman who inhabited the house, who took our somewhat unexpected invasion with real Roumanian-peasant placidity, showing neither pleasure, astonishment, nor fuss. Her words were few and she stolidly continued cooking her "mamaliga," whilst we ate better things. We left her half of our "better things," and departed again after half an hour, having tried to wrap up more efficiently. But it *was* cold, and the wind was fierce.

Finally we arrived at Văntorî and inspected the neat little Mircea canteen, its provisions, the old woman who cooked and the gendarme who guards it.

When we arrived we found a few Russian soldiers installed in my house, quietly drinking tea which they had brought in a basket. They were quite peaceful; the officer even saluted in a dogged sort of way, but they had no intention of quitting the place.

These passing Russians are a great terror to those who

keep my canteen, and to all the peasants in the villages. Of course they are also a danger to my provisions, but here, for the moment, they have neither been discovered nor stolen.

Unfortunately, it was not a meal-time, and the children were dispersed far and wide, so I was not able to see them eat their lunch, but the old woman declared that they come regularly and that she feeds them well. Having to be satisfied with this assurance, we started off for our farthest canteen, Dumeni, near Dorohoi. I was keen to visit my far-off canteens as in these days one is never sure when one will again get a chance of doing anything. As it happens Dumeni was a good way beyond Dorohoi; when we started we had no idea that it was so far.

On the outskirts of Botoşani, we stopped at the aviation field to take in petrol, as the Rolls-Royce cannot run endlessly without being fed. Some jovial French soldiers came to chat with us, at first quite unaware who we were, and inclined to be jokingly familiar, much admiring our car; when finally by the attitude of our Roumanian soldiers they discovered our identity, they became somewhat blushing and much less amusing.

Then on we went; we drove and drove and drove endlessly, the wind at times behaving cruelly towards us. Luckily the roads were in part good, some even excellent, but in spite of all our running we did not reach Dumeni before dark.

It is a large village and we had the luck to find a notary who has taken great interest in my canteen, putting heart, energy and understanding into our undertaking. The house is large and clean, and although we arrived quite unexpectedly we found the court-yard, kitchen and little dining-room spotlessly neat and clean, all the cups and plates laid out on the table, beautifully washed, although the repast was only just over. Here also we were not able to see all the children, as it was too late; but these surprise visits had the advantage that we see things as they are, no one having had the chance to make unusual preparations.

Here, the Russians, instead of being a nuisance, have been most helpful. I visited every corner, and found every-

thing spick and span. This is decidedly the best run of all our canteens. Fifty children receive two big meals a day, and hot tea in the early morning.

Before starting on our way home we ate the remainder of our lunch in the notary's house; he even kindly offered us some boiled eggs and some quite good biscuits baked by his wife.

The drive home was endless, despairingly endless. We had pulled up the hood, but it had no sides and gave us little protection against the blasting wind. Luckily I had a stock of thick peasant coats which I always carry about with me to give to wretched people along the road. Ballif cleverly contrived to put up one of these coats on the wind side, which made a sort of screen, a blessed relief.

Carol drove beautifully. I admired him, because during our thirteen hours' outing, we were rolling nearly all the time and most of the way the furious wind was dead against us.

I came back not particularly tired but stiff in the neck, and my eyes swollen with the wind. We were received with many Ahs! and Ohs! by the servants and maids, who considered the length of our drive risky for me in more ways than one. I confess to having been very ready for a hot cup of tea and bed!

The English have had a big success in France, a surprise attack with their tanks; they progress considerably, taking several villages and many prisoners.

Jassy, Saturday, November 11th/24th, 1917.

My work with Mamulea grows and grows; we have endless undertakings, and the work goes well, but of course we have no end of difficulties, for the Roumanians in general are difficult to work with, and times are hard.

Received a timid young Englishman, Mr. Bird, who had been at Teheran and has been detached from there to help Sir George Barclay here. He brought me a letter from my cousin, Dmitry Pavlovitch, who was saved from the revolution, having been exiled by the Tsar to Persia after the Rasputin murder.

After lunch I had a long conference with our fat minister, Constantinescu; he is clever, sly and very capable and gener-

ally we get on very well together, but to-day I had to induce the wily old gentleman to answer point for point in what way he would help the Americans in their work. I had the American proposition in clear writing, and did not mean to let my minister off without a counter-proposition.

I tried all my powers on the clever but slippery little man; to-day I had no intention of being nonplussed, and I think he understood it.

I then went with Madame Cincu to visit the club room and night refuge that I am building together with the Y.M.C.A. I think this is going to be a very useful organization. I also visited the Jewish Orphanage close by, and found the children in the middle of a Bible lesson. They were just going through the story of Jacob and Esau in impossible Jewish-Roumanian; I was able to show them that I too was well up in the Old Testament by asking pertinent questions, but what I did not do was to tell them that I thought the story of their patriarchs anything but moral, in fact a disgusting story. I finally left, but not before having promised stockings for the boys, and, of all things, soles for their boots!

Thank God, Nicky is getting on splendidly. Normal temperature, and let us hope that this nightmare is over.

I have received three wagons of butter, sugar and rice which I ordered from Odessa; it seems almost incredible that anything should get through in these days.

I am afraid that our dear old Miss Milne will be leaving us shortly, a sad moment for all of us, and for her the end of her long and honourable career.

Jassy, Tuesday, November 14th/27th, 1917.

Day of hospitals and audiences. Spent part of my morning amongst the consumptives, distributing General Moşoiu's white cheese and dried plums, which he had faithfully sent me according to promise. It was quite a feast for my wretched invalids, but oh, God, what sad sights I saw! It was quite evident that many of them were trembling on the edge of the "beyond."

My audiences began with a lady who has a high opinion of herself, and whom I had known in better days. She

was as usual ridiculous, painted, familiar. She had composed a piece of music which is to be dedicated to the King and Queen, and which she wants to conduct herself on some public occasion. She put her services at my disposal, her services as well as her heart, her intelligence, her charm, but if I could find no use for them she put them at the disposal of Elisabetta or Mignon, or Nicky, or Ileana; no matter whom as long as it could be a member of the Royal Family. With this she squinted, full of assurance, convinced of her indisputable right to be one of the elect!

After she had tried to charm me by voice, speech and manner, she departed to be replaced by a very nice English clergyman come from Petrograd. I loved talking to him, because he knew all my Russian family and had been special friends with Olga, Tsar Nicky's younger sister; he was also an intimate of Cousin Dmitry and young Yusupoff, and knew in detail all about the Rasputin murder. He also knew Ducky quite well and had worked a lot with her at the beginning of the War. He was a most pleasant and charming man.

He was followed by a very ugly lady from Galatz, who came to talk to me in the name of the bishop about the Galatz orphan question, and then came two more females from Vaslui, one with a sad story about a daughter she could not educate, and the other about a daughter she could not marry off. When I had managed to show sympathy in every direction, I jumped into my motor and drove to inspect the Galata hospital now under Ferreyrolles' care, where I gave the invalids the remains of my white cheese and plums.

Nicky is nearly well, but has still to be kept in bed.

Jassy, Thursday, November 16th/29th, 1917.

An early start with Elisabetta for Roman. An extraordinarily beautiful day, like the best days of spring with an indescribably brilliant sun.

So as to arrive in a tidy condition, we drove for once in a closed motor, a rare occurrence, but thanks to Prince Stirbey, a beautiful Cadillac has been put at my disposal by the military section. He argued that I have to go about

just as much as any general, so why should I not therefore occasionally have a closed motor, especially in winter?

The road between Jassy and Roman was in splendid condition, and we flew along with a feeling of exhilaration. Ballif sat in front, in high spirits and very proud of the pace our car could go.

A short stop at the ecstatic Madame Nevruze's house so as to tidy up, then off to the Mircea Hospital which the American Red Cross has taken over from the English, my giant Fitzwilliam brothers having gone nearer to the front. The Americans have a large personnel, and everything looked most satisfactory and prosperous, with all the necessary improvements.

Of course we had to visit everything in detail, not only the patients, who looked cheerful and well cared for, but the kitchen, the outhouses, also the pigs and calves which formed part of their riches, and we even visited the wood depot, a very important adjunct.

By this time we were ready for lunch, which was quite an American affair as it was their Thanksgiving Day, and they were much enchanted to have us with them. Of course it ended with a pumpkin pie, which it seems is the correct thing. Colonel Anderson sat on one side of me, and Mr. Baker of the English Red Cross on the other, two pleasant companions. Opposite me sat Elisabetta, who was being entertained by Dr. Perkins, who is cheerful, intelligent and interesting. It certainly was a successful meal, with a feeling of goodwill towards all men.

After lunch, the Prefect carried us off to visit different places where food was being distributed to the poor. We were enthusiastically cheered wherever we went, and in spite of rumours that Roman was a dangerous place because of the Russians, I insisted upon walking from street to street straight through the crowd, who received us warmly, the dreaded *tovaresb* saluting us just like our own people.

Of course we had still to go to more than one hospital, also to a Jewish school.

In several of these hospitals I had the pleasure of finding some of my special friends, wounded, and evacuated from Cotăfănești.

A visit to Roman would not have been complete without the classical tea given by Madame Nevruze Khan in her house, which has become hospitable because of her adoration for her Queen. All the important people of the town had congregated in her salon, where we were offered delicious food. As usual, everything was done with that peculiar order and ceremony established by my fervent old friend. She had clothed herself in immaculate white, and looked like some strange Tibetan nun.

Jassy, Sunday, November 19th/December 2nd, 1917.

News worse than ever, an atmosphere of panic in the air. I try not to allow it to infect me nor those around me, but often I feel the tears come burning to my eyes.

Received a very warm telegram from King George of England saying that my children and I are welcome in England at any time. At first the telegram made me very happy, but on riper reflection I understood that it was a bad sign; they recognize that we are in danger and that our position is untenable.

For lunch, to which Nando came very late, we had as visitors General Tcherbacheff with his daughter and her husband, also Ratchitch with his wife and Nindi Romalo, whom the Americans want to have as their secretary as he speaks excellent English.

The air is saturated with anxiety. Rumour will have it that to-day or to-morrow the Russian soldiers are going to arrest or murder their officers. Tcherbacheff is in a panic. I wish the Russian officers had more pluck; I am sure that with a more decided attitude much mischief could be avoided; they seem to have entirely lost their nerve.

Seeing that the weather threatens to change, I quickly drove off with Elisabetta to Villa Grearul, because the roads are still dry, and it is some time since I visited my dear old Sœur Pucci. Mignon and Miss Milne followed in another motor. Our coming brought great joy to the sick and to those who were nursing them; we drank a cup of tea, had a good talk and then back we drove again over the bone-breaking road.

There are always great objections when I drive out that

way because we have to pass through a large Russian military settlement and people consider it dangerous.

During my absence Minister Constantinescu had gone to the King to try and persuade him that we must leave with all our children this very evening for Ghidigeni or Coto-fănești, as there is every reason to believe that to-morrow will be a dangerous day. Luckily Nando came straight over to me and we agreed that we were of one opinion; nothing in the world would induce us to budge, nor to show the smallest signs of anxiety. Stirbey, who had been called in, upheld our decision. The situation has just to be faced come what may, and above all we must show those Russian bullies that the much despised little Roumanians are not afraid of their threats. As long as we keep steady and are disciplined, I am convinced we can have the upper hand even over superior numbers.

But I feel waves of horrible anxiety mounting on all sides. Above all we must keep calm and continue living and acting as though nothing were the matter.

Nicky was allowed out of bed for the first time to sit in a chair: he felt top-heavy, light-headed, and weak in his legs, but otherwise well.

Went to bed early, read a little, and in spite of everything felt quite calm.

As will be seen in the following pages, I was possessed by the idea of resistance at any cost, even against quite impossible odds. The struggle was heart-breaking and little by little I could not help noticing that everybody was losing faith.

This made me frantic and reading through my diary it is pathetic to see how I hoped against hope, calling upon all my strength and energy to keep off our horrible fate. I was terribly unresigned and could not believe that we were destined to give up. The "never-say-die" of my English temperament and upbringing made the struggle unbearable.

But the iron circle enclosing us became tighter and tighter, the Russians were now treating with the Germans, and Lenin's time was at hand.

It was a terrible moment when I realized that I stood alone with my opinion, that no one rallied round me any more; they were the reasonable ones, I was the impossible idealist. People began to fear coming to me, but in my exaltation of resistance it was some time before I realized this.

As this is *my* story, the story of my life, I let my diary speak for me. What is the old saying? "There is only a step between the sublime and the ridiculous." Perhaps I was ridiculous, but we can, each of us, only act according to our natures, our inspiration.

Nothing immediate followed upon those dreadful days, nothing absolutely decisive happened, and with that elasticity peculiar to the human heart, getting accustomed to the terrible situation we almost began to take fresh hope and to breathe more freely. But the *angoisse* remained, and I began to dread the sound of an opening door, of a voice suddenly raised in case it should mean approaching disaster or the announcement of some unbearable news.

What upheld us most was the strong feeling of love and trust which mounted towards us from all sides. We daily received tremendous manifestations of sympathy. Misfortune united us in a very special way. The King had become popular, and though the Roumanians are not very demonstrative in their affection, an atmosphere of loyalty surrounded us which upheld our strength. In our case, disaster had not weakened, but only strengthened the link binding us together.

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Chapter XXII

THE AGONY OF DESPAIR

Jassy, Monday, November 20th/December 3rd, 1917.

A CHANGE in the weather, it is raining. The situation continues to get worse and worse. I had to tell my ladies that the day might come when I should have to leave suddenly with my children, without being able to take any of them with me. I thought it was better to prepare them for this, however painful it was.

But the horror of the situation is that if it came to the worst it is not even sure that we should be able to get off. The Russians might turn into enemies who would not even let us pass through their land! It is a ghastly situation, and the only thing is to take it so calmly that panic cannot spread.

We had Vopika, the American Minister and Captain Walton, the American Military Attaché, to lunch, and of course the situation was gone through with its chances for remedy, for existence, for flight, for defence; the thousand and one questions with which we martyr our brains. The worst is that we are so entirely in the dark, we can make no plans, take no decisions; there is nothing positive to face, we can only sit still and wait, and each day may be the last. It is ghastly!

After lunch I received my friend Professor Panaitescu, and with him also we reviewed our chances, but we decided to continue our work and our Christmas calendar for the soldiers as though we had a future ahead. Then Maruka appeared, and of course the same sort of talk began all over again. Finally Prince Stirbey came; he is always the best informed, and, thank goodness, he remains steady.

The Entente Ministers have had long interviews with

General Tcherbacheff, pressing him to take a decided attitude, promising that if he does everybody will uphold him.

The news was received from Roman that General Ragosa and his staff were arrested by his soldiers as had been feared. The incredible thing is that none of these generals try to resist: this is incomprehensible to everybody, especially as those who now have the upper hand in Russia are upheld by no sort of authority and are not recognized by anyone but the Germans!

The whole thing is so fantastic that I cannot even put it plainly down on paper.

Jassy, Tuesday, November 21st/December 4th, 1917.

The situation remains awful. We have simply begun to speculate in which way we are going to die. Which ever way we turn we are sold, we are betrayed. . . .

Of all the bitterness we have had to taste the knowledge that all along we have been betrayed is the most unbearable. There seems no way out. Russia is in a state of putrefaction, is falling to pieces, and no one stands up to take things in hand.

Each day the command passes to a lower fellow. The Leninists are in full swing and they are entirely in German hands, moved by German money, mostly false money, so that Germany does not even get any the poorer. The whole army is now in the hands of a sub-lieutenant, Krylenko, whose first order was that there is no more rank in the Russian army.

They have murdered General Duhonin, who was accused of having allowed Korniloff to escape; they murdered him in the most barbarous way at the Stafka, where he was chief for a time. It seems they literally tore him to pieces.

The foreign military attachés are at Kief, as the Stafka is now in the hands of the Bolsheviks, of the rabble in fact. Everything is crashing around us and we live half in the dark, as it is impossible to realize what is really going on, or to know in what way things are going to turn.

For the moment the Russians have declared an armistice on the whole Russian front, including Roumania; that is to say the Russia which is represented by the Bolsheviks;

other parts of Russia protest, and the Russian ambassadors abroad do not recognize those now in power. The *gâchis* is complete and poor little Roumania is caught in the cruellest of traps, and has to sit still, speculating as to the way she will have to die.

General Tcherbacheff, upheld by our generals and the Entente Ministers here, preferred to declare the armistice himself, so as to avoid receiving orders from those whose power he does not recognize. We are still in doubt about how this has been received by the Petersburg maniacs.

After lunch a young French doctor and his Roumanian bride came to ask me if I would marry them at Piatra. This sounded a peaceful note in the middle of all this turmoil; I promised to come if "circumstances" would allow me to do so.

All sorts of people still came to me about this, that and the next thing, and finally my friend, Colonel Anderson, appeared, who is entirely with me as to *resistance à outrance*.

The plan would be that with part of our army we should cut our way through the south of Russia towards the land of the still faithful Cossacks. It is only thus that I see our escape. It is but a forlorn hope, but at least it is not an ignoble one! To sit still and die, suffocated between Russian traitors and German haters, is really too poor a death! To this I would prefer *la Grande Aventure*; fantastic I know, hardly belonging to our days, but honourable, brave and free!

Oh, God, if only I were a man, with a man's rights and the spirit I have in my woman's body! I would fire them to desperate, glorious resistance, *coûte que coûte*!

Prince Stirbey came late and we discussed every hypothesis; at times I was angry, at times eloquent and hopeful, at times desperate with the feeling that the walls around me are getting narrower and narrower, till I shall be suffocated. The Prince has the faculty of remaining quite calm, letting me blow off steam, and then quietly arguing every point out with me, reducing things gradually to their normal size. The process is often painful, but generally healthy.

Cella came to dinner, and afterwards with Nando we sat together in my room, and there I put the whole case

before them in clear words, with its every issue, lingering lovingly upon the only one supportable to my own nature, *la Grande Aventure*. I had the feeling that I had sown the seed of that same desire in their hearts, but perhaps it was only the glamour of my own enthusiasm which for a moment carried them off their feet.

Jassy, November 22nd/December 5th, 1917.

I wonder how many days more I shall be able to write Jassy at the top of my pages. The awful nightmare continues, the darkness, the impossibility of seeing clearly in anything; and of course people begin to lose their heads, the good and the bad comes out at those moments. The lovers of panic, the lovers of disorder, the jealous, the resentful, the tremblers, the cowards, all lift their heads, and each according to the smallness of his heart talks and acts and agitates.

Personally, I had a very bad day, I am not yet resigned to this last situation. I want to fight it, and it seems there is no fighting it. No one sees any possibility of our being able to save ourselves by fighting; they all consider it would become a bloody and useless massacre, they *all* join in to say so, even Berthelot. No one will vote for armed resistance, and it is that which annihilates me, the horrible, deadly humiliation of perhaps having to lay down our arms because our enormous, powerful Ally has failed, utterly, abominably, dragging our country, which has behaved with utmost heroism, down with it to disaster. Before the appalling injustice of such a fate for the first time I feel beaten, I feel humiliated, as though I had lost my place under the sun; at last I feel that it is too much, too much.

Like last year when Mircea died, I wondered why I had to live—Why? To see this, why, why, why?

I continue the same life, hospitals, audiences, and so on. Amongst the people I received to-day was a certain Dr. Hansen, a Dane, and a most fascinating personality whom some people think is a spy. If he is a spy, he is a pleasant spy, which is more than can be said of many people who are not spies.

At lunch we had General Averescu and Grigorescu,

come for a military conference and to join in the Council of Ministers, in which it is to be decided if we too are to agree to an armistice, so as to gain breathing space, so they say. In spite of all my courage and energy the moment has come when I can do nothing else but let the floods flow over my head, and what dark waters! What our personal fate is to be, I do not know; I am so one with my country that I cannot imagine a personal fate, a fate which is not mixed up with that of the country. For the first time to-day I could not face people without tears, my heart is wrung by extraordinary agony, I seem to read condemnation in every eye.

I feel as though I were slowly dying, in spite of my splendid health and vigour, and my, up to now, dauntless spirit: I think I am beaten, beaten, and I do not know how to accept defeat, not this kind of defeat!

After lunch I drove with Elisabetta and Miss Milne to Proprikan to distribute clothes amongst the children of my little canteen, also to inspect it, and see if everything was in order, which it was.

By some irony of fate I had settled some time ago that each Wednesday we were to have a little music for the ladies who come daily to my work-room, but in the general turmoil I had quite forgotten this till the poor musicians innocently appeared with their instruments, and politeness obliged me to let them play, which was certainly difficult to stand to-day—the music seemed to be grating on my racked nerves.

Finally before dinner, Jorga appeared in despair, to ask me what this news about the armistice really meant. He was like a child, quite distracted by a blind agony of apprehension and grief. Carol and I tried to calm him, but my own heart was too full of revolt to find very convincing arguments. I am in the dark—in the dark.

Jassy, November 23rd/December 6th, 1917.

It certainly is very difficult to bear this dreadful situation. What I mind most is how all our foreigners seem to see that this is the end! Some even would like to see us leave immediately, want us, in fact, to fly, but at the

same time they give us to understand that we should probably not be able to get through Russia!

It has been decided that certain Russian and Roumanian officers are to go and parley with the enemy about the armistice. The meeting is to be held, I believe, at Focșani.

I kept up my usual sort of life, though in the morning I was very near tears all the time, gaining in self-control as the day went on. I received Mamulea and Georges Balș to talk about Red Cross affairs, also about the decorating of those who had faithfully done their difficult duty. Before he left I told Georges Balș that if it came to the worst, I wished to leave all my precious and jealously guarded depots in the hands of him and his wife, begging them both to continue my work in the same spirit in which I had begun it, and if possible to continue distributing the provisions in my name even when I might be far away.

Later, a gentleman came to see me who had, of all things, written a play upon my Mircea's death. The tragedy of it having struck him, he put it into patriotic verse. Of course I had to explain to him that it was impossible to put me on the stage, although no doubt it would be very dramatic and emotional. He was much grieved, and to console him, I let him read part of it to me: some of his verses were really touching, but of course they did not exactly remove me from the flood-gates near which I had been hovering all day.

Lady Muriel Paget, head of our Roumanian Red Cross in England, came to lunch. She had been working in Russia, and has been very ill. The news she brought from there did nothing to allay our fears. Jorga was also at lunch, and continued to be funny and biting in spite of the horrible situation, but he is a most choleric and erratic gentleman.

After lunch I received a certain Captain Laycock of the English Intelligence Service. He came to tell me that if I wanted to send the younger members of my family away he was at my disposal to help me, and had an English officer who knew several languages, who could accompany them. He was a simple, cold-blooded, unemotional little man, who ended by telling me that I and my eldest daughters

ought to fly to Salonica in aeroplanes, a journey which in no wise tempts me in this cold, and into the bargain without a scrap of luggage. An adventurous and dramatic exit no doubt, but one for which I have no taste. Curiously enough I was never one of those who had much wish to fly, in any sense of the word.

Laycock finished by declaring in a very business-like sort of way that he was a royalist and therefore entirely at my disposal, that he had risen from the ranks and was very much impressed by being in the presence of a queen.

I have no sort of news from or about Ducky, yet each day I ask myself with horror if all is well with her! I have no means of finding out. She must be in constant danger.

Nicky is quite convalescent.

Jassy, November 25th/December 8th, 1917.

I had a bad morning. I felt all along that a crisis was imminent, that there would have to come a moment when there would be an outburst or a breakdown; I had been too cruelly harassed.

My breakdown came through a talk with a certain English general, who was sent to speak to me. The Allies have come to the conclusion that I must be made to understand that resistance on the side of Roumania has become impossible.

The poor little general is a good and honest fellow, but not the sort of deputy to send to a desperate woman. His cold-blooded way of admitting our hopeless situation and that "he had always said so," etc., made my cup overflow. Although I had always been the loyalest of the loyal, growing indignation against those who were abandoning me was slowly accumulating in my trustful heart, and whilst I talked I felt a terrible storm rising within me which had to find utterance in words, in fearfully plain, accusing words, words that are said once in a lifetime, when nothing else but truth seems possible, the barest, bitterest, sword-sharp, withering truth. The outbreak came after he tried to persuade me in the name of the Allies that I must give up.

I turned fiercely round upon him and asked him how



WITH SOME OF MY HUMBLE FRIENDS.

he, an Englishman, dared come to an Englishwoman, and into the bargain a queen, and tell her she must give up. And just because he was an Englishman, I felt that I could say things to him which I would not have said to a man of any other nationality; it was my right to cry out all that had been stifling me. Now in cold blood, thinking over all I said, I marvel that I was able to say it; but I do not regret my words, they *had* to be said.

If we are to die, let our Allies at least know that we do not die like blind fools, but as conscious heroes, knowing that we have been sold and betrayed, and that at the moment when, through the failure of others, our front is becoming useless, our big protectors begin to haggle and bargain with us, as to whether they will be able to keep any of the promises given to us when we were still prosperous, before the Russian revolution cut our throats!

I do not think that a queen has ever lifted her voice to say such terrible naked truths, which can only be cried out at an hour when one is facing death, and facing it bravely, without flinching, no matter how slow the agony.

The little general looked at me aghast with his washed-out blue eyes; no wonder he found no word in reply. He left me with hanging head.

He was followed by old Mr. Baker, of the English Red Cross, who came to propose carting my family away, and this also upset me. Neither Nando nor I can decide to part with any of our children at this crisis. Whilst they are still under our wing, we know what we can do for them, but if separated in these terrible times, how should we ever know when or where, or even if *ever* we would meet again?

If our fate is to be finally surrounded and made prisoners, let us at least be prisoners all together, or if it comes to the worst, the male members can flee. God knows what it will come to, but what we deeply feel is that we cannot separate!

The third person who came to me was Goey Odobescu, formerly one of the officers of my regiment, a faithful friend, and a comrade of our young days, but whom I had not seen for a long time. He meant to be calm and so did I, but

when we faced each other, all our grief for our country, and the realization of its mortal danger, rose up before us, and added to that we recalled all the happy memories of yore, so that the interview assumed an aspect of tragedy seldom experienced between queen and subject.

We were both fighting back our tears, fighting for calm, for all the courage we meant to show each other, but all our country's agony seemed to stand between us as we looked into each other's eyes. I understood at that moment as never before how utterly I belonged to my people; I was theirs, and to tear me from this soil would be tearing me up by the roots!

And after that I really had a breakdown, at last I wept, wept as small children weep, with great sobs, my head on the table.

Goey had come to thank me for all I had done for the country, as mother, as Queen, as sister of charity: "Thank you for the way you have loved it, helped it, understood it, and suffered with it. Perhaps you stand at the end of your work, and we with all our love and desire for sacrifice, we, your soldiers, cannot save you for the country, nor the country for you. I feel all this as one groping in the dark, for nothing has really been explained to us, but I wanted a last time to look into the face of my Queen and to tell her: You too have been a soldier, we honour you as one of the bravest within our ranks."

Yes, after that I wept and wept, and said violent things, cruel things, tremendous things. I was a woman, a queen, a mother, a beaten soldier, weeping out her agony for once, before patiently taking up her burden again to struggle on.

Such hours are dreadful, they leave scars on heart and soul, but one must not be ashamed of them, they have to be. Afterwards one is all sore, but one enters into a sort of convalescence which means renewed health.

In the afternoon I remained quietly reading in my room, whilst Ileana, unaware of the storms that are shaking us, painted wondrous pictures on the ground at my feet.

The day, however, was not over. We had a military dinner in the King's house for some officers and three non-commissioned officers, who had just been decorated for

special valour, no one at table except the family and the soldiers. Much devotion was shown us, it was a loyal repast, but I seemed to see everything through tears.

This rather terrible day came to an end in Maruka's house where, surrounded by faithful allies of several nationalities, we listened to Enescu's marvellous music, which to-day rose to an agonizing pitch of beauty, well in keeping with the vibrating tension of the hour.

It is especially that prodigious sonata of Lequeux that lifts one beyond oneself into a world of inconceivable emotion, and Enescu plays it like no one else. He then left his violin for the piano and played the "Erlösung" of Parsifal, and I can only say that it sufficed as emotions for one day.

Jassy, Saturday, December 2nd/15th, 1917.

I continue my usual sort of life—hard work, hospitals, interviewing people, receiving all those who need either help or advice, and those who need cheering up.

This morning Panaitescu came to me with the translation of a small thing I have written for the newspaper *Romania*; he has done it well and I think it is quite publishable, but one must have a certain courage when one speaks out publicly like that. I have learnt to have that courage. In all terrible moments there are two sides to everything: there is the glorious and grand side as well as the one that is terrible and awful. One must do one's best to uphold the one and to keep the other at bay as much as possible. During epochs of national emotion one must try to exploit all good sentiments so as to give the bad ones no chance to thrive, and this I try to do. But it needs courage for a queen to come before the public, and she must feel very strongly to be able to face even ridicule for the sake of what she considers right and useful.

I feel that this armistice is one of the greatest trials we have yet had to bear, and that it is an hour when I ought not to be afraid of speaking to our army and people. I know that my action can be criticized, for it is not usual for a queen to speak to her people through the medium of a newspaper, but how otherwise reach thousands of ears?

It is a question of feeling, of weighing the pros and cons ; I had to judge for myself, and I judged that it was right to speak to them precisely at this moment, so I did. I like talking things over with Panaitescu because he believes in me and considers it is fortunate for our country that I am its Queen. He finds most people disappointing, especially politicians, but though he is an ardent democrat and was for a time even a Socialist, he finds it easier to talk to me than to anyone else.

Then came Evans Griffith, my nice little Welshman of the British armoured cars, accompanied by a Belgian, and with him I talked very openly about my soreness at the way our Allies were treating us. It was rather a painful conversation as are all conversations that touch upon deep and terrible truths, but at present I can only stand absolute truth. When one has almost reached the point of death then one is no more afraid of one's words ; they have to be strong and to the point, without compromise.

We had invited for lunch the poor old Russian general, Ragosa, who is leaving, a humiliated and broken man ; in his day an ardent and brave soldier, he is now crushed by the downfall of Russia. He can stand it no more, so he is going. It was pathetic and unbearably sad. When Nando gave him the Grand Cross of the Star of Roumania he burst into tears and then embraced Nando, with both arms round his neck. It was one of the saddest scenes I have ever witnessed ; the poor old man expressed all his feelings in broken and impossible French, which made his outburst still more pathetic. His wife was there too. She speaks better French and is very nice and intelligent.

Amongst the last orders issued in Russia is one to the effect that all property is to be given up ; to-day everything belongs to everybody so no one has a right to his own house or to any of his possessions. This poor old couple do not know what they will find on their return. A monstrous state of affairs !

After lunch there were more emotions to tear at my heartstrings. I had to take leave of Dr. Armstrong, of Miss MacGregor and of Dr. Fitzwilliam, one of the giant brothers, who, all three, had so faithfully worked with and

for us. Finally came the saddest parting of all, the parting with old Leila Milne. Her going means the end of so many things, but her old sister in England claims her. To-day she can leave under the care of the English. Tomorrow it may be too late. So she tore herself away from us because she had to.

Jassy, Thursday, December 7th/20th, 1917.

Each day now when I awake a crushing weight seems to fall on my heart, to fall suddenly, smothering the short peace that night and sleep had allowed me, because whatever trouble I have I am nearly always allowed the blessing of sleep.

These days are really almost more than anyone can bear. To think of what is going on in Russia, to see disaster coming nearer and nearer, to strain every nerve, every particle of faith, hope and courage, and to have to realize that it is all in vain, that each tiniest little light which shines quivering for a moment inevitably goes out! To be ready for every sacrifice, to feel sure of your people and your army, of their courage and bravery, and to know that because of a treacherous Ally gone mad within your own walls you not only cannot remain true to the cause you are fighting for, but have to see all that remains of your country devastated little by little, by savage hordes which, after having eaten up everything in the country, are now beginning to destroy even the houses because there is nothing else left upon which they can lay hands.

How can one bear it, how can one still continue to hold up one's head and to pray to a God who can allow such a crime to be perpetrated beneath the face of the sun? I feel as though I were trying to stand up against something black and overwhelming which rushes in upon me from all sides as though, dead tired, I were continually stumbling through the night, for ever picking myself up again and all the while searching for a light which is dwindling and dwindling so that soon it will be quite dark!

At eleven I presided over a big meeting with all the Allies and some Roumanians to discuss organizing a big relief work for the population behind the front. I was

astonished at my own calm, at the self-possession with which I talked. I was able to lead the discussion and I made everybody understand what I was aiming at and what part I expected each of them to play.

I really must be getting old for I have *tous les courages* and allow myself to adopt an authoritative attitude I would never have dreamed of adopting a short time ago. War certainly forces me to give my utmost in every direction and to take myself seriously at last.

I had all the foreign ministers as well as the foreign representatives of the Red Cross, our Red Cross delegates, and also the local ministers concerned with public welfare.

I managed to lay the foundations of what I wanted and got the first point settled : that each country should appoint representatives and that these several representatives would together decide how best to divide up the work. I myself would stand as director of the whole thing and would always be ready to receive any of these representatives when they needed advice or came to make a report.

I had also called in the generals, Averescu, Grigorescu, and Vaitoianu, whom we afterwards kept to lunch. After lunch, General Averescu came for a long talk with me in my room ; he is always very eager that I should know exactly what he is doing and what his opinion is ; his loyalty towards me has always been very marked. I then took him to my Y.M.C.A. tea-house and showed him the work we were doing there. He appreciated our effort and was, in particular, much delighted with my idea of having a night refuge for soldiers passing through town who cannot find shelter.

Stirbey came to tea and we discussed the horror of the situation and I fully realize that he is trying little by little to accustom me to the thought of being able to accept that which may still be asked of me. For the moment everything within me cries out against it, I cannot face it calmly. When my thoughts dwell upon it I feel as though my brain were giving way. He left me, however, a little hope. But after dinner Nando came and took away even the little hope with which I had lived through the afternoon.

He came to tell me that General Tcherbacheff, whom

we had promised to support against his own troops, had this evening given in to the Bolsheviks, although he had in the morning accepted our plan of resistance. The man must have lost his nerve at the last moment, although we were all there to back him!

I am afraid that this is really the end, that we have played our last card and have lost. Nando also tried to lead me gently to the thought which I cannot face and which for the moment I have not the courage even to write down, and for the third time to-day, once with Averescu, once with Stirbey and then with Nando, I had the feeling that I was being led up to an operating table where I was to be operated upon without chloroform.

Jassy, Saturday, December 9th/22nd, 1917.

I was just going out when Prince Stirbey arrived to report that there had been trouble in the night. Some Bolsheviks had come to try and arrest Tcherbacheff, threatening him with pistols and declaring that troops were marching against Jassy. The King had been called up in the night and that was why he did not come for breakfast. Stirbey told me that our troops had been ordered out to meet the Russians and to fight them. He seemed to be doubtful if this had been a reasonable order and he feared the consequences, but I rejoiced greatly and told him that he could not have brought me more welcome news—that I was sure there would be no fighting, that those rudderless cowards would turn tail at the sight of a single gun! I had always been in favour of showing them our teeth instead of sitting still and allowing them to bully us.

Events proved that I was right in my conjectures; at the very first sign of resistance on the part of our troops the revolutionaries, when summoned, laid down their arms without protest at once.

Tcherbacheff was saved by a faithful Cossack he had with him who, backed by Roumanian soldiers, defended him with a pistol; those brave Bolsheviks cannot face even a pistol, it seems. Personally I had always declared from the first that to show them one's teeth was the only way. Few would agree with me, being afraid that any action on

our part might be the signal for bloody encounters and wholesale massacre. I never believed there was any fight in those despicable creatures.

Jassy, Sunday, December 10th/23rd, 1917.

For some reason, in spite of all the depressing news the general atmosphere to-day was less heavy. In these dreadful times even the smallest alleviation of disaster is good news; we have become very modest!

For lunch we had invited Sir George Barclay, General Ballard and Colonel Anderson. We had ordered a specially good meal, as Sir George is a great gourmet. For some unknown reason it was a gay meal and Nando was in extraordinarily good spirits. Afterwards many burning questions were discussed, the great excitement of the moment being the disarming of the Bolsheviks; up to the present it has all gone calmly enough, but we must be continually prepared for any dangerous reaction on their side. Undeniably these are important and anxious days.

After lunch I received a Russian gentleman of the Red Cross whose name I always forget. It is quite heart-breaking to talk to any right-thinking Russians just now; they are so horribly humiliated. Nando came into my room whilst the man was there and was very nice and kind to him, having once met him at Ghidigeni.

I visited my night refuge, which goes beautifully and is always full. My good Madame Nicolescu (who is an Englishwoman married to a Roumanian officer) prepares excellent hot soups for those who come in late, hungry and cold; I am very glad to have secured Madame Nicolescu for this work, which is one of my pet organizations and is exceedingly helpful.

From there I went to pay a visit to Madame Vintila Bratianu, who has arrived to-day from Bucarest. She has been exchanged for other *détenues*. She had been a prisoner from the beginning of the War and was shut up as a hostage. It was a very upsetting meeting for us both and we were profoundly moved.

She told me many, many things, too long to relate, but one thing gave me great pleasure; all the women of Bucarest

sent me the assurance of their absolute loyalty and let me know that they were quite ready to continue suffering for the good cause.

Alas, all that had been reported about old Peter Carp is true. He is a traitor to us and is working with the Germans to make it impossible for Nando and me ever to come back to our capital! Our old friend Peter Carp! It seems impossible, incredible; but we shall have to face this sorrow along with so much else.

She also told me that the Turks, Bulgarians, Germans and Austrians all cordially detest each other and quarrel continually about everything.

She said too that on the anniversary of Mircea's death requiems were read in every church in spite of ill will on the part of the enemy. I could hardly tear myself away from her—there was so much I wanted to know, and yet at the same time I was afraid of hearing it all, afraid of more suffering.

Jassy, Tuesday, December 12th/25th, 1917.

Christmas Day abroad. Here it was a busy day for me, filled by duties of every sort and kind. After having talked to endless people I hurried off (I am always hurrying) to an English Church service at the English Legation, taking Nicky and Ileana with me. There Sir George showed me a telegram which had been sent me, or rather in which there was a message for me, from the British Government. This message was the result of the rather stormy interview I had had with the general the other day. In this message England declares that she understands the horror of Roumania's situation and that no matter what happens she will uphold Roumania's interests and "revindications," regardless of how much she will presently be forced to give way.

I sent Madame Kopkov and my old maid, Elise, to take some cakes to the German and Austrian prisoners I had visited in the military hospital the other day, so that they too should have some little Christmas pleasure. I sent a specially full little bag to the boy from Sigmaringen, and even found a postcard of Sigmaringen to put with it. Amongst the prisoners was a tailor from Vienna and he

told my maid that his greatest ambition was to make "*ein Kostüm für die schöne Königin*," which seems to prove that once a tailor always a tailor, even in the face of the enemy! But are we really enemies?

We had lunch in Nando's house with some officers whom he decorated, and with General Grigorescu with whom I had several talks, but I mean to ask him to come and see me so that we can have a serious discussion about military matters.

My daughters made a little Christmas tree and gave a tea-party to the French people with whom they have been working in the hospitals, and we asked Enescu to play for us, which he very kindly did, playing most divinely all our favourite things.

After dinner we had a little jollification for the English. We gave them good things to eat and also a plum-pudding, which was much appreciated, Ileana serving it round solemnly. In fact Ileana had all the success—the English Military Mission simply adore her.

On these occasions Nicky is always particularly gay and is not loath to profit by the excellent refreshments he serves round to our guests. Nini looks at him with virtuous disapproval. When I am not there it seems that Nicky's language is not always strictly decorous, so that Nini feels she must pray to God to forgive "the poor dear child."

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Chapter XXIII

THE OPENING OF 1918

THE New Year came, 1918. Not yet New Year in Roumania, however, as we still had the two dates, but New Year elsewhere, and we saw it in, making company with the English, French and American missions, and gathering as many friends about us as possible, not knowing how long we might still be together and wondering what 1918 will mean to us all.

As Ileana had no more books to read I began writing a fairy story for her, and this became my solace during my spare hours, which were few. But I wrote easily just then, and queer as it may sound, all the suppressed fun in me came out in this story told to my child. Every few days I had a new chapter to read and I put so much humour into my tales that even the King would come of an evening and listen to it so as to have a good laugh. This was a sort of safety-valve and refreshed our tired and anxious spirits, *cela détendait nos nerfs*.

My every faculty seemed to be awake; it was as though there were several personalities in me which gave strength to each other, as though I could occasionally switch off all my pain to become quite simple, a child with my own child. This was the instinct of self-preservation of which I have often spoken before. It has often helped in hours of overstrain. It was like putting a tired hunter out to grass.

Jassy, Thursday, December 21st, 1917/January 3rd, 1918.

My Mircea's birthday; my little Mircea who lies peacefully in his small, cold grave in the enemy's hands and who knows nothing of our troubles and nothing any more of summer, winter, autumn or spring, who knows nothing of war or peace, and who sees nothing of all the injustice that

is being done under the sun. How much farther, I wonder, shall I be driven from Mircea's grave? He would have been five years old to-day.

My two little adopted orphans, Vasili and Nicolaita, always talk of him. Every morning they come to me whilst I am dressing and then they point at his picture and say: "Poor little one, he died, poor Mamma Regina," and every day with childish persistence they repeat those words which pierce my heart! And they do not know what courage it takes for me to have them always with me instead of him.

We went to lunch at the King's house with the generals who had come to confer with him. I had no time to talk with them, but there is an atmosphere surrounding the King just now which makes me anxious. I do not know in what way he is being influenced.

When we came home from a theatrical performance, Laycock of the English Secret Service asked to see me. He brought me bad news, amongst other things the news that there were Russians coming to Jassy to try and murder the King and his two sons. He gave me the letters to read, which he had received from his agents in Russia—ugly news. In the south of Russia, however, the state of affairs is not yet so desperate; the Entente could still do something if only they were clever enough, but they are too undecided, too hesitating, whilst Lenin knows how to speak to the masses which are looking for a leader.

I sent for Prince Stirbey, and, with Laycock, we examined the situation, a serious, anxious, tragic conversation. This was another of those days when I felt nearly at the end of my tether, but I grind my teeth and will *not* break down. I shall struggle on to the bitter end, but to-day with the memory of Mircea breaking through my calm, and being also physically tired, I really had to strain every nerve to remain brave.

It would have been a comfort to let myself tumble into bed, but I had still to go over to the King's house to decide about certain decorations to be given to the doctors for Christmas; so Carol, Nando and I worked at it till a late hour as I would not leave his house without having my "decrees" signed. I could not go off before that neces-

sary work was done as the question of decorations is difficult, and it is I who know best which doctor ought to be rewarded, as I have seen them at work. But this work of persuasion drives me to the verge of desperation—it is so slow and so unnecessarily tedious.

When finally I got to bed I was a poor, tired and very reduced Regina. I longed for fond motherly arms in which to weep!

Jassy, Friday, December 22nd, 1917/January 4th, 1918.

I got up early, before it was light, and went with Colonel Ballif to inspect the distribution of bread to the poor of the town. I had been told that it was badly done, that the women came at early hours, even sleeping part of the night in the street with their small children in their arms, so as to be amongst the first, but that in spite of this it often happens that they have to go away without having received their bread. I wanted to see things for myself.

I must say that I found conditions less bad than I expected. In parts of the town there were certainly unavoidable accumulations of people, but not crowds, nor did they seem to be complaining, and the bread was being handed out without much ill will or loss of time. In several places I got out of my motor and went amongst the people talking to them, asking how far they had come, how long they had been there, if they received sufficient bread, etc., and nowhere did I hear of any special grievances though I made a tour of all the bakeries. Our people are extraordinarily patient and expect so little of life.

It was gradually getting light and I then drove to the big military bakery a little beyond the town. Here a certain Colonel Barca is doing splendid work. I found everything in astounding order and a really enormous and systematic work was being done. As I turned back towards home the sun was just rising, bathing the whole of Jassy in a wondrous golden-pink light. As it was misty all the houses and churches appeared to be rising out of clouds, soft, rosy clouds, almost a fairy town; it really was a lovely sight and a reward for my efforts at early rising.

I came home for a cup of tea and a little work in my

room, and didn't go out again till eleven, when I went to inaugurate a canteen at the station *triage*. This *triage* is one of my prides because really good work has been done there, chiefly owing to my relentless insistence, never giving up until it was completed. It used to be one of the chief centres of infection—now it is perfection.

Dr. Cantacuzène, General Berthelot, Anderson, Baker and others were there, our Allies having also contributed to the running of this canteen, which we named "Santoni," after the French doctor who sacrificed his life here last year doing heroic work in deplorable conditions during the typhus epidemic.

On my return, Prince Kropotkin came to see me, in distress, of course, like all decent Russians just now. Then Panaitescu appeared bringing me the first copy of our Christmas calendar, at which he has really worked like a slave and with all his heart. To those in big countries who have unlimited means this humble work would probably not seem much, but for us in these times it represents a tremendous effort.

We lunched in the King's house and at three o'clock I received General Averescu and I had a long, serious talk with him, which from my point of view was most unsatisfactory; he considers our case desperate, and demolished every one of the points I still cling to. A most depressing interview but it was a frank and open discussion, which I always prefer even if we cannot agree.

Then came General Vaitoianu and we went over the same ground; he was less categorical and therefore less trying to listen to. He is a man of few words, but a man ready to do his duty to the utmost, no matter how difficult and dangerous. Although it was a sad conversation he did me good because I understood that he was in deep sympathy with my unutterable distress.

Jassy, Saturday, December 23rd, 1917/January 5th, 1918.

My Ileana's birthday; that sweet child who is everybody's joy. A more delightful, attractive child cannot be imagined—she is really perfect in every way. She is pretty, good and intelligent, with a captivating charm which none

can resist. Sometimes I tremble because she is really too perfect. Everybody made extraordinary efforts to collect tiny gifts, which is very difficult just now as nothing is to be had, not even a flower. She was, however, delighted with all she received and knows so charmingly how to express her pleasure over the smallest thing. Although she is so sweet and so much loved, she is entirely unspoilt.

Jassy, December 24th, 1917/January 6th, 1918.

The Roumanian Christmas Eve. My work was strenuous, getting things into order, and trying to find something for everybody, seeing about all the arrangements and at the same time receiving endless audiences.

I saw Michel Cantacuzène and had a long political and military talk with him; he has the same ideas as I and, therefore, was not difficult to get on with. At half-past twelve the Metropolitan came with the holy images and we had a short service, and then kept the old gentleman to lunch. I made amiable conversation with him in Roumanian during the meal and many a sweet word did he say to me in unctuous tones about my good works and national virtues.

Paid my usual visit to the Y.M.C.A. tea-house, where I am eternally distributing cigarettes and biscuits; I then generally sit for awhile at the head of the long table where my soldiers are drinking their tea. I talk to them and play the hostess and thus have many broken bread with me.

At seven we lighted our tree and received our whole household according to the good old custom. All the ladies and the gentlemen, both military and civil, and every servant, down to the smallest kitchenmaid, was given something. Vasili and Nicolaita, my orphans, also took part in the jollifications.

After the distribution of the very humble presents we offered a plentiful repast to our entire household, which promoted good cheer.

I must say I admired our cook, for he served up excellent and varied food in spite of the dearth of provisions. That night we went to bed somewhat cheered because in spite of our troubles it had been almost a gay evening;

at least we are still all together and for this mercy may God be praised.

Jassy, Thursday, December 27th, 1917/January 9th, 1918.

More feast days! Yesterday was Mignon's nineteenth birthday and to-day is our silver wedding. Twenty-five years of marriage! Really and truly I still feel very young, much younger than I imagined people would feel at their silver wedding. Neither do Nando and I look old. Yet the road has been long and much lies behind us, both joy and pain.

Those who remember my arrival in Roumania remember the intense joy it was to the country; "*C'était un beau mariage, une princesse de grande maison.*" The new little country was happy to have a princess who was related to all the reigning houses in Europe—granddaughter of old Queen Victoria, granddaughter of the Tsar of Russia, first cousin of the German Emperor and so on. . . . Also I was young and healthy and there were legitimate hopes of children. In this I did not disappoint my people; at the earliest possible date I gave them the heir they longed for. I was too young in those days to realize how great the joy was, I was too busy learning to be a woman, and in those days all political or national ideas were totally incomprehensible to me, nor had I been prepared for all the sacrifices eternally demanded of me from the very first day of my coming.

I confess that I was at first very miserable, terribly lonely and utterly disillusioned. Only very gradually did I learn to accept the atmosphere into which I had been transplanted, although from the first I loved the country and its simple peasants; but there were many people and things I did not like nor understand.

I believe the Roumanians were inclined to care for me from the first; they certainly liked my face and my fair hair. My youth and my candour evidently astonished but also touched them. The old court, however, wished me to win my spurs and the school to which the Crown Prince and I had to submit was a hard school which cost him many a sigh and me many a tear.

Well, all that is of the past ; to-day Nando and I, hand in hand, confess to each other that at this hour, in spite of our misfortunes, or should I say because of them, we have become the firmest possible friends, attached to our country in a way not often given to sovereigns.

We are *one* with our people, and in spite of the momentary defection of some, our people are one with us. Those few faithless ones on the other side do not count : they must be counted amongst those painful realities, generally called disillusionments, that follow one all through life !

Of course this was a tremendous day of congratulations, beginning early in the morning. A deputation of ladies brought me a plaited crown of *beteala* (silver thread), which I wore in the evening at our big dinner, instead of a diadem, as I have no jewels with me here. Everybody was very much touched and the children were sweet and affectionate. Before lunch I went with them over to the King's house where we received different deputations, first French, then Russian officers. I could not help grieving for the poor Russians ; their situation is odious and humiliating. At first they used to be uppish and full of disdain for Roumanians ; to-day, in spite of our misfortunes, we have become for them an envied centre of loyalty, fidelity and order.

We then received all our household and gave them a big lunch. Prince Stirbey made a very touching and yet simple speech, quoting words pronounced by old King Carol at our wedding when he said that the young bride had come to be a new mainstay to the country. The Prince developed this theme, demonstrating how the bride had lived up to the country's expectations.

It was an emotional meeting for everybody, all our feelings rendered more intense and vibrant because of the existing situation ; each word of affection, trust and understanding assumed a special significance.

Even the utter impossibility of being able to offer us any of those gifts habitually brought to sovereigns on these occasions made it all the more moving, because no one had anything to offer except sympathy, affection and loyalty.

Most of the afternoon was spent receiving different deputations of ladies and listening to more loyal speeches.

Amongst others I received a deputation of officers' wives who came to offer me forty thousand francs which, through the initiative of Madame Coanda, they had collected for my poor.

The day ended with a big governmental and military dinner. Before we sat down to table Nando decorated Prezan, Vaitoianu and Grigorescu, and then Prezan, in the name of the army, offered me the Virtute Militar, first class (a war medal given only to the bravest soldiers), for the fearless way I had, through thick and thin, moved amongst the troops. I felt much honoured.

At dinner, Bratianu made a very fine speech to which Nando replied. Nando had to make seven speeches to-day and spoke perfectly each time. The Government offered us silver rings bound in war steel and gave me five hundred thousand francs for my good works. What joy! I can now go ahead with all this money!

There was something unique about the atmosphere of this meal. Those assembled round the table looked at us with tearful affection, for indeed this festivity, in the midst of all our trials, was moving. Even Maruka, who never goes out, made the tremendous concession of taking her place as minister's wife. We had, of course, to let her see that we were duly impressed by such an immense, world-shaking sacrifice.

I wore my plaited wreath of silver thread and found in one of my trunks a silver and white dress I had never worn and which came in useful to-day. My little silver wreath gave me a certain air of dignity, in keeping with such an honourable anniversary.

Jassy, Sunday, December 31st, 1917/January 13th, 1918.

Yesterday I took a day off, which means that to-day business accumulated and my morning was one long series of people coming to ask every possible and impossible question till my head was near to bursting. I have really more on hand than one person can reasonably do; it will finally wear me out. My life is too full of people; they suck dry my heart, my intelligence and my purse.

At half-past eleven I received General Ballard. He came



WITH GENERAL GRIGORESCU WHERE WE HAD STOOD TOGETHER
DURING THE BATTLE OF MĂRĂȘEȘTI.

with good intentions and I meant to try to find him sympathetic, but his cold-blooded way of giving us up as a bad job tries me beyond endurance. For an Englishman he is certainly not inspiring.

I then presided over a small committee composed of Baker, Anderson, Balș, Belloy and Mamulea, to consider our big feeding and clothing problem. This was not as satisfactory as I had hoped it would be. People in official positions do not seem to have much heart. We have learnt much, but not yet enough. Some are still too comfortable, and will not open their souls and minds to the fearful suffering of the people. Those at the head of things have not seen people die, nor the heart-breaking misery in the villages amongst the women and children. If they had seen it as I have they would be more eager to help; efficiently, I mean, not only on paper.

There is certainly something wrong with the existing order of things; therefore also our administration is not as it should be.

This is the only thing which makes me wish to be very, very rich. I could then be entirely independent and beat our politicians all along the line. Money gives such tremendous power, and if a queen is rich no one is able to stand up against her when she wants to do good. Sometimes it really needs tremendous courage not to be disheartened nor to become a perfect revolutionary oneself!

The ideal would be a democratic autocrat, an *absolute* monarch, who would be strong enough and good enough to make the necessary innovations without anyone daring to interfere; it would be the only way to bring new health into old ways really become rotten.

In the afternoon General Petala appeared with five small boys from my Mircea canteen at Păunești, come to sing Christmas carols; he had also brought two old peasants from the village along with him. We fed them all copiously, gave them some kind words and sent them off laden with gifts.

As it is New Year's Eve all sorts of people come to sing Christmas carols and New Year songs. Before dinner we had a choir from the Air Force and after dinner Jorga

appeared with the chorus from the theatre. He had composed New Year's wishes in the form of popular verse, which was recited by our oldest actor, Notara. No end of Jassy ladies had also appeared, representing different societies. According to custom they were plentifully fed whilst we accepted their manifold good wishes.

We saw the New Year in to the sound of Enescu's most glorious music at Maruka's house; even the King, making an exception for once, came with us. We did not get to bed till two!

Jassy, Sunday, January 14th/27th, 1918.

The weather continues warm and fine, though rather misty these last days. I did some writing this morning, then I went down to my Y.M.C.A. where I am always warmly welcomed by my many soldiers.

We had the Belgian Minister and his wife to lunch; they are the sort of people who are crushed by misfortune and therefore heavy company.

The news from Bessarabia is satisfactory. Our troops entered Kishinev, music *en tête*, well received by the population. We hope that the railways will soon be in our hands so that transport should no longer be hindered by the Bolsheviks.

Herling and Kühlmann have been making long speeches about peace and peace conditions. George of England has telegraphed to Nando very warmly and Lloyd George to Bratianu. Wilson has made another speech in which he defends the cause of Italy, Serbia and Roumania, but if the Ukrainians are going to make peace, what will our position be?

All these questions are burningly interesting, but very intricate, and my head is a little too suffering these days for me to write everything down more fully. I am having a series of bad headaches which undoubtedly come from overtiredness, slowly accumulated through long months of moral suffering.

I shall just have to ease down a bit so as not to collapse. But I *won't* collapse; that's not my way. All the same I must not drive the machine too hard, nor even my

very courageous heart. *Ich habe zu viel Menschen in meinem Leben*; they sap me, drink up my vitality little by little.

I had a short rest after lunch and then gave a big tea for all the artists, writers and painters who have been helping me with my calendar.

Jassy, Thursday, January 18th/31st, 1918.

To-day we received the news that the Bolsheviks have declared war on us and have taken possession of our treasure and of all my jewels that were at Moscow. Our Minister, Diamandi, has been sent away from Petrograd, but we do not know whither.

I first received a little French sculptor who is keen to make a medal of me, and then Madame Popp from the station hospital who came to tell me that they are organizing a "refuge" in the style of what I have made, but they will have over a hundred beds where passing soldiers can be housed for the night. I am delighted they are doing this, as I always felt there ought to be something of that sort at the station. My "asile" is not big enough for all our needs.

For lunch we had the irresistible General Moşoiu, who spread goodwill amongst us; his stolid content when everything seems so unstable is very comforting.

A long drive with Carol and Miss Fifield to clothe another set of poor children in one of the villages. I had enough clothes for all of them, and it did our hearts good to see their small shivering bodies slip into the warm clothes and underclothing. After tea Prince Stirbey came to ask me to help him with a telegram the King is sending to the King of England. When he read it to me I suddenly burst into tears. It too cruelly summed up our desperate and hopeless situation, the fatal abandonment in which we find ourselves, cut off, betrayed, no help forthcoming, no help *possible*. I was really very sad to-day and what for me was terrible, for the first time I admitted in my heart the uselessness of resistance; we cannot fight enemies on three sides, it's quite utterly impossible.

It seems the Germans have let us know that they mean to break off the armistice. Well, I suppose it was decreed

by Fate that we are to be completely annihilated; or at least that this is to be *one* of the acts of the tragedy, the rest remains to be seen.

I am quite quiet, with the cruel calmness of one who sees no issue and can only sit still facing the end. At least I can face it without complaint; it's not my fault if the sky falls in.

Chapter XXIV

BETRAYAL

Jassy, Thursday, January 25th/February 7th, 1918.

CAME back to Jassy after three days' wandering amongst the destitute peasants and the troops at the front. Arrived at half-past nine to meet a thousand troubles.

I had expected this, but it was worse than my worst anticipations. The moment I crossed my threshold I was overwhelmed by nothing but terrible reports.

The Germans have sent an ultimatum; they want us to come and treat, and because there is calm on the other fronts, they have well furnished our front with troops, knowing that the Russians have forsaken us and that we have to occupy also those positions they have abandoned. They also know that we have our hands full in Bessarabia. The Germans, themselves, have trouble, their people are beginning to have had enough of it; they have been promising peace to the discontented, but as they have not obtained what they hoped in Russia, they are going to avenge themselves by bullying us into submission.

They have given us four days in which to make up our minds. What for long has been expected has come about, the Liberals have handed in their resignation as they cannot decide what answer should be given.

So Bratianu has fallen at last! To-day all his enemies can rejoice and all sorts of hopes mount from the shadows in which they had lain so long. If only they were all clean hopes and ideals! But alongside of those crushed seeds of good, there are also the evil growths of jealousy, revenge and the longing for power.

I look on and am sad—so few really care for the *cause*, so much is personal that one shudders and saddens at the

sight. One's belief in humanity gets sorely tried, at times, sorely!

The Conservatives are for absolute and immediate refusal to treat, whilst Bratianu wants to treat so as to gain time with the intention of not giving in finally; but the Conservatives do not trust him sufficiently to go with him into this new undertaking, so there is division and therefore downfall of the Government.

Michel Cantacuzène came to me this morning and we talked lengthily and mostly we agreed. Our ideas about the honour of the country are the same, but knowing the military position better than he does I too am for gaining time by agreeing to treat, no matter how odious it may look in the eyes of the Allies. We have sacrificed so much for the Allies, again and again, and they have upheld us so little, giving us words, nothing but words and often meagre words at that. We are so far from everybody, they cannot judge of our suffering, and what they hold out to us, and that with which they try to uphold our love for them is cruelly insufficient, when disaster stares us in the face.

I, personally, see the honour of the country in keeping utmost fidelity to the very end. Morally the country would rise to an extraordinary height; but, alas, not everybody to-day has as implicit faith in the Allies' final victory as I have. I know only too well that they have not helped us as they might have done, not because they would not—I give them that credit—but because they could not understand. They are too big, we too small and for them too unimportant.

The Conservatives are not strong enough to form a Ministry by themselves and General Averescu being the only man powerful enough to meet the situation, it is Averescu the King has asked to form a Government, a quite new Government with quite new men.

What deeply troubles me is that I do not know how far Averescu is for peace; my heart is torn with fear and anxiety. Anything rather than dishonourable peace, every drop of blood in my body protests against this. I am going through hours of indescribable anxiety.

The whole day I was feeling dreadfully upset ; there are certain thoughts I cannot resign myself to, but I do not think it will come to the worst ; it is just another dreadfully bad moment such as we have been through again and again, but it is true that luck has forsaken us, everything is always against us, every event, every turn of the wheel, every move of friend or foe.

In Russia things are getting worse and worse, terror reigns everywhere. Now the so-called "Red Guard" has begun plundering the churches ; it is the old story, the French Revolution over again, probably worse. It fills me with horror. In Finland dreadful things are happening, and Ducky is there, and I have had no news from her for three months. All my telegrams and letters remain without answer, and I do not even know if they reach her.

Jassy, Friday, January 26th/February 8th, 1918.

Awoke with that odious feeling of weight on my heart and tears in my throat. Why can we never receive good news ? This continual anxiety is almost more than one can stand. But I carry on my work, as it is the only way to bear my anguish.

In the morning the King received the ministers who had tendered their resignations.

Tremendous excitement in town and all conflicting passions are let loose.

In the afternoon Nando received General Averescu and asked him to form a Government. He accepted. His hour has come. May God inspire him to give his best. I hope that the step we are taking will be good for the country, but I am not without fear, although I well know that Bratianu is played out and Averescu is the only man who could step in now.

Went with my two daughters to pay old Sœur Pucci a visit. I am afraid there is no doubt that she has cancer ! She was up and about, but her face is drawn with present and coming suffering and unconsciously her eyes have the haunted expression of those who know that they will soon have to face death and much pain. Why has also this to be ?

Jassy, Saturday, January 27th/February 9th, 1918.

Averescu came to Nando to discuss the new cabinet. On the whole Averescu is choosing well, although there are some I would rather have seen him without.

I had many people to receive, as they all flock to me in their anxiety. Amongst others there was St.-Aulaire, and I had the courage to speak to him with the utmost sincerity, trying to make him see where the Entente again and again makes deplorable mistakes.

I explained how they never sufficiently sustained the King so as to give us a complete feeling of trust and help. I had the courage to say all that had to be said in a last, desperate effort for efficacious collaboration in spite of everything being against our cause, against our hope, against our every plan of rescue.

St.-Aulaire took it well, and I do not think I offended him. I believe I did more good than harm; besides, I showed him that all was not lost, as long as they honestly helped us to play our cards not too badly. Later in the evening I also saw Vopika, the American Minister, and told him much the same as I told St.-Aulaire. He too was completely nice. I was so full of emotion that I don't think any of them were indifferent to my pleading, because I *can* talk when I am deeply moved, and I know they are all of them personally attached to me, they know I have played the game. . . .

Ghidigeni, Sunday, January 28th/February 10th, 1918.

During the night I travelled to Tecuci and left my train early for what I call a really royal day of hard work. At nine I was received by General Grigorescu and then immediately got into my motor and drove to a distant village to distribute clothes to some extraordinarily destitute refugees. Here I met with the most delightful American, Mr. Tooës, formerly an artist, a delightful fellow of English origin, a mile long with a genial, smiling face also longer than most faces; in spite of the good he is doing amongst the half-clothed population, the artist in him sighs when he sees their picturesqueness destroyed by soap and solid clothes.

I helped to distribute endless provisions ; we were hours at it. General Grigorescu presided over us with his usual pompous manner. The American Red Cross is doing splendid work.

The general then begged me to go once more with him to the point where we had stood together during the battle of Mărășești ; he had a sentimental desire to see it again in my company. So we drove to the point where a high bank overlooks the Siret and remembered how we had stood there together whilst the shells flew over our heads. The sun had come out in all its glory and the view was marvellous ; on the other side of the river, in the small wood, the Germans are still in their trenches.

After this, again endless hospitals to visit, and all sorts of diseases, amongst others smallpox, which I saw for the first time ; I have a holy horror of smallpox, and confess that it was an ugly sight.

The great Grigorescu offered me lunch at his headquarters.

I had arranged with Prince Stirbey that the King should send me a telegram announcing Grigorescu's promotion, which I was to receive at lunch-time. The telegram arrived faithfully at the very minute it should, and I had the pleasure of giving this brave soldier the news he had pined for so long. It was received with solemn and holy joy and all his officers left their seats to go up and kiss him, which must have much astonished my American companions.

At luncheon, kindly Anderson became very sentimental over the Zigane music and opposite me sat Grigorescu pleasurably ruminating over his new dignity. I had, however, to tear myself away from this friendly meal to go again amongst my refugees.

We first went to a place where hundreds of destitute people were huddled together in extraordinary dug-outs, a picturesque, tattered, wretched congregation, living just anyhow with an enormous lot of children. To-day the sun was so beautiful that the whole place was more picturesque than heartrending, but to think of these same dwellings in rain or snow is a nightmare.

Here with the aid of genial Tooës, I presided over a

second huge distribution, after having wandered about amongst the dug-outs, entering many of them and talking to the wretched people. I never saw such incredible quantities of children, some of them adorably attractive.

You might imagine that this was enough for one day, but not at all, I had to be bumped back over atrocious roads to visit at least five or six more hospitals and charitable institutions, being, so to say, passed from hand to hand amongst all those eager to show me their work, amongst others Yvonne Camarasescu, Blondel's daughter (Blondel was French Minister).

When I had reached almost complete exhaustion I was even then snapped up by enthusiastic Madame Radu Miha and asked to visit her hospital train. To my tired feet the train appeared to be miles long.

Finally, to reach Sybil's beloved Ghidigeni was like running into harbour after a tiring passage on rough seas.

Ghidigeni, Monday, January 29th/February 11th, 1918.

Awoke in Sybil's broad, roomy bed. I had slept wonderfully. Having been *really* tired yesterday evening, I had gone to bed early. Grigorescu had also dined with us, shedding around him the sun of his new dignity.

As my morning was not to be a busy one, I allowed myself the luxury of a rest with my pen and books and no hurry, having agreed with Sybil that I would have a late breakfast by myself in my own room, coming down only at ten to visit the hospital.

It was like a spring day, I had drawn my curtains whilst it was still dark and had seen dawn slowly efface the night. I revelled in being in the country, and thought of many things and only wrote a little; above all I rested, and the absolute stillness of the country was a perfect balm.

There is horror in the thought that if our defensive lines are drawn farther back Sybil would lose her Ghidigeni. She is preparing herself to face this cruel eventuality, but let us hope that this will be spared her.

At ten I visited the hospital, but there are not many wounded left. We also inspected the canteen Sybil is going

to establish for poor children, for which I shall supply the provisions.

With Mariette Balș, and followed by all my Americans, I went to visit Constance Cantacuzène who is still in her field hospital at Tutova.

She gave my followers some excellent Madeira wine which melted their hearts to such a degree that they all became sentimental, Colonel Anderson becoming in fact quite ecstatic.

Thence another series of hospitals, returning to Ghidigeni for lunch.

Round about three, having picked up Mariette Balș, who had remained at Tutova, I went by train to Barlad where the great Grigorescu had prepared me a tremendous reception, military honours and all the rest. The whole of Barlad had been turned out; schools and population, etc. I was asked to go part of the way on foot through the streets so that the people could see me close to, and I was frantically cheered.

I was taken to the military orphanage where I visited every corner, finally distributing sweets amongst the children, having listened with intelligent interest to the habitual loyal, patriotic or sentimental verses recited by anxious or forward infants of different ages. Always to the sound of lusty cheering I then proceeded to the huge Beldiman Hospital, roomy and well kept but fatiguing for feet still tired by yesterday's round. It was an endless visit and when I was just congratulating myself that my troubles were over my iron colonel, Ballif, whispered into my ear that I was still expected on the other side of the street in another enormous hospital.

Of course I agreed to do my duty to the bitter end, and crossed the street to the joy of the expectant public, and was received on the other side by a delicious old doctor quite like a comic figure on the stage; protruding tummy beneath the belt-line, pouchy cheeks, short white side-whiskers. He actually began talking to me in atrocious but fluent English.

This hospital was as endless as the other, night was coming on, my feet were getting more and more tired, my

provisions were running out, yet on and on I went like a sleep-walker, more and more beds, more and more rooms, more and more eager, suffering faces, more and more kisses on my hands. Dana, my little cocker, who had insisted upon coming with me, kept getting mixed up with the legs of all those who, in classic Roumanian fashion, were following me in countless numbers. This amiable but not very practical peculiarity had an uncomfortable way of causing a fine squash at every exit, especially when I had to turn suddenly round to find myself *nez à nez* with my followers, who could not at a moment's notice become as thin as air.

I was actually allowed an hour's rest in my train which I used for correcting some of my writings, after which I dressed and returned to Grigorescu's house for dinner. Sybil and her husband had also been invited. Everything was done with the inimitable order and decorum, not to say pomposity, characteristic of the general. He is an admirable *metteur en scène*. Before the meal began I was solemnly led to the drawing-room, where the general offered me a framed photograph of poor Tsar Nicolas. It was a picture of him I desired to possess in which he is sitting as a captive in his own palace gardens on a block of wood with three Bolshevik soldiers standing on guard behind him, a picture beyond words pathetic. The gift had been placed on an easel and was presented to me with all possible ceremony and appropriate speeches, to which I answered as admirably as my talent of adaptation permitted.

Then only were we allowed to go to dinner, which was excellent, accompanied of course by many speeches, loyal speeches, pompous speeches, patriotic speeches. There was also much music, the *Lautars* being at their best.

Colonel Anderson, on whom gipsy music always has a melting effect, made the finest speech of all which I had to translate into French, rather lamely I fear, but greatly to the kindly gentleman's satisfaction; he loved having a royal interpreter.

Dinner was followed by a musical entertainment where different officers showed off their talents whilst our funny Plagino, in his neat little uniform, and with a face *de circonstance* played *le Maître de Cérémonie*. His squint and miss-



THE MOST TRAGIC OF PICTURES: THE TSAR IN HIS OWN
GARDEN GUARDED BY THREE BOLSHIEVİK SOLDIERS.

ing tooth added to his funniness, which can be irresistible. Mobilization has an absurd effect upon certain people.

Then at last to the station, but my great general friend remained ceremonious to the very end. The train could not immediately leave as the motors had to be shipped, but nothing would induce the great man to quit the platform before my train, so instead of being able to go to my well-earned rest, I had to stand for an extra half-hour at the window, which I did in a becoming *vieux rouge* dressing-gown with all my pearls and smiles on. Thus ended my visit to General Grigorescu in his "Residence."

It will be admitted that after this I well deserved my bed.

Jassy, Tuesday, January 30th/February 12th, 1918.

Returned to Jassy to be overwhelmed by bad news: Ukraina has signed a peace and has promised to export all her corn to Germany. Trotsky, without exactly signing peace, has declared that the state of war in Russia is at an end and that the army is demobilized.

The iron ring which is to strangle us is getting tighter and tighter. Everybody talks to us and of us as though we were dying and had but a few hours to live. A feeling of frantic revolt takes hold of me. I *cannot* resign myself to it, I cannot; it breaks my heart, it kills my soul, it is too, too unfair!

I have arranged that every day two little orphans from my Jassy Orphanage come to our breakfast, every morning two different children. I feed them copiously on all the good things with which I can stuff them, and Vasili and Nicolaita, my own private orphans, stand at my elbows like two greedy puppies eager for the best crumbs.

To-day the sound of children's voices, so happy and eager, was in tragic contrast to the despair I carry about with me.

The King gave me part of the bad news, and Prince Stirbey came to amplify it. Then we had to hurry off to the church of Trei Ierarchi, where a service was held in honour of the patron saints; it's a lovely little church. Feeling as I did, everything seething within me, it was both terrible and calming to stand still and listen to all the chants.

The chorus sang beautifully and the acoustics are splendid in that church, small though it is.

Lunch was a trial to me to-day, as I could hardly bear facing people, but that meal over, a greater ordeal awaited me—I had to receive the new ministers.

I have no personal objection to my new ministers, but what they actually represent is a deadly grief to me; it means the failure of all our hopes; it is the seal upon the terrible tale of suffering, sacrifice and disappointment of the last year and a half. And now we are suffocated, drowned, sold, betrayed, caught in an airless trap!

I tried to be calm with my new ministers, I talked about indifferent things with complete banality, but the moment I said a word of what I really felt, all my despair immediately burst through; not one of them, I think, was left in doubt of my feelings.

Averescu so little expected to find me in such a state of despair that after I had said good-bye to the others, he asked to be allowed to speak with me alone.

The general was curiously moved to find me in such a state of despair. He certainly did not expect that I would take it thus, and in spite of his quiet self-possession, it upset him. He and I had always been good friends, and I had always staunchly defended him when he was attacked. I think that of all the royal family I am the one that he likes best; and now we suddenly faced each other as opponents.

He tried to convince me that our position was neither tragic, hopeless, nor humiliating, as I appeared to consider it, and was sincerely distressed to find me so unresigned. In spite of the tragic quality of our interview he made quite a pleasant impression on me, but I could not help saying to him what a grief it was to me to see him, our best general, called upon to treat for peace.

After Averescu left me I received Sir George Barclay, and with him also I had a tragic conversation, and finally I wept as only a woman and a queen can weep, when she sees, one after another, all her hopes crushed by a relentless fate which deals blow after blow till nothing is left, neither hope, nor future, nor the possibility of resistance; no attainment, not even the recognition of our stoic heroism.

We have just to fall out of the circle of the living, like a dead weight because we have been abandoned and betrayed, and now we are like a dying animal which everyone forsakes !

The kind old gentleman didn't even try to find any words of consolation ; he just ejaculated a profusion of distressed " Ohs " and " Ahs," and himself felt like weeping.

To assure our railway transport it was decided that we should send troops into Bessarabia, and from Jassy we anxiously followed their advance. Russia was chaos, and beginning to fall to pieces as at that time there was no recognized head, but Lenin was in the ascendant and the reign of terror had begun : we received horrible news about the way the disbanded soldiers were massacring and torturing their officers.

A deputation of Ukrainians arrived at Jassy, and we received them. They were *feu et flamme* for their so-called new liberty, and spoke of their marvellous hopes. They were earnest, sympathetic men, and I could not but listen with interest to what they had to say, to all their illusions and delusions. Each part of Russia seemed to have a different ideal and to wish to set up independently. The Tsar has been the string upon which *toutes les Russies* were threaded : the string had been cut through and united Russia became a thing of the past. Each man to-day imagined himself on the threshold of a new, glorious era, little realizing that he is destroying instead of building up.

All the rejoicing about a new and free Russia gave me an uncanny feeling ; I had clearly the sensation that we were going towards something dark and horrible, and could not understand why Europe rejoiced : I felt as though it would one day be punished for thus rejoicing.

France, desiring to honour us at an hour when we were so distressed, had elected me as *Membre Correspondant* of the French Academy of Fine Arts ; a great honour which much touched me as well as all the Roumanians. This news was announced to me by a telegram from Victor Antonescu, our Minister in Paris, couched in the following terms :

" *Flameng, qui se fait l'honneur de prendre l'initiative de la*

proposition m'a communiqué que l'Institut de France, Académie des beaux Arts, vient d'élire Votre Majesté Membre Correspondant.

Depuis que Napoléon a fondé l'Institut, pour la première fois une femme est appelée à une pareille dignité.

En accueillant avec chaleur la proposition, l'Institut a tenu rendre à Votre Majesté un hommage digne d'elle et du noble pays qu'Elle représente avec tant d'éclat; il s'incline respectueusement devant l'art et la souffrance personnifiés aux yeux du monde par Votre Majesté."

This honour paid me at such a moment was like a sudden flash of light from an impossibly better world, with which actually we had nothing to do. I was deeply touched, but too sad really to be able to rejoice.

The pages which follow fully describe my state of mind when General Averescu, replacing Bratianu, took over the Government so as to treat for peace.

I considered it perfectly abominable for a general to accept such a mission. I was probably both wrong and unfair, but no argument could convince me, the fiend of resistance possessed me, and not even those I would generally listen to, could make me see reason. I began to feel cruelly lonely, almost an outcast, because of that impossibility of resigning myself to our fate. The idea that the Allies would forsake us and that we should be left alone, strangled, done away with, drove me to the verge of madness. Wherever I turned were closed doors, nowhere a way out, and worst of all I read pity in every eye. I did not wish for pity; I wanted to fight!

But events took their course in spite of my protest, in spite of my despair. Envoys headed by Mr. Papiniu were sent to Bucarest to make contact with the occupied part of the country. The news he brought back was unpleasant to hear. Our so-called Germanophiles, Carp, Beldiman, Lupu Costachi, Virgil Arion, Stere, and Nenitescu came to him with a signed paper declaring that they no longer recognized King Ferdinand as their sovereign and voted for a new German dynasty. This was certainly hard to bear, as all these men had been personal friends, but we were now so accustomed to cruel news that I did not break my heart over this; but I regretted old Peter Carp. I had always

liked him from the first. We were made to understand each other, but this War had torn to shreds stronger things than my sympathy for Peter Carp.

But there was also good news from Bucarest, many a greeting sent by those who had kept faith, amongst others from Didine Cantacuzène heading those who had worked in Bucarest; humble gifts were sent me from our wounded soldiers, who had themselves made them.

One day Berthelot came to me and asked if he could, in front of me, decorate Ballif with the Légion d'Honneur. I accepted with joy, so Berthelot came to my room and in my presence decorated my iron colonel and we were all three deeply moved, especially as we felt that this honour was being done to us because we were soon to be abandoned, given up, and a brave old soldier like Berthelot could but be in sympathy with my attitude, even if the reasonable side of him considered it quixotic.

Also Colonel Anderson found ways of showing me his deep-felt sympathy, I can even call it admiration, and he promised me that if he should have to go he would leave me all his Red Cross provisions, so that I could carry on their work. They were all kind and gentle with me, but as doctors at the sick-bed of one who is condemned to death.

They tried to make my dying easy, but, alas, I am not one of those whose death-agony can be peaceful or resigned, my constitution is too vigorous, too healthy; I am built for resistance not for capitulation; but I shall allow my diary to tell my tale, although I can give but extracts, for the whole of it would be too long.

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Chapter XXV

OUR INFAMOUS PEACE

Jassy, Wednesday, January 31st/February 13th, 1918.

SAW Professor Panaitescu, when we discussed something I had written for the papers, deciding that it was not quite the right thing for the present situation; he wanted me to write something else, but I explained to him that my grief was such at this moment that I found it impossible to write, as all my words would be too strong, too great an outburst of suffering and grief. They would be a torrent which I should never be able to stem. So better to be silent just now: impossible for me to be lukewarm.

It seems the poor man was dreadfully upset to find me in such a state, and whilst he gave Mignon her lesson, kept asking what could be done to help me.

Then Delavrancea, Cella's father, came: "just because he had a great yearning to see me at this hour of sadness," was what he said, for no other reason, "not to protest, or complain or advise, or to mourn, only just to feel a little warmth" through my presence. I do not know if I can give much warmth just now, but I liked him for believing that I could.

Finally Fasciotti, the Italian Minister, came, he also to talk over the situation with me; he is an exceedingly clever man, and I know he often gives good advice, but his Latin mind is very far from mine; however, I felt that he was an ally.

Jassy, Thursday, February 1st/14th, 1918.

I remained in bed all the morning, needing a rest and intending to see no one, but at eleven General Grigorescu asked very pressingly to see me, so, of course, I received him. He confided to me what was worrying him, and we

talked the situation over ; then I asked him to remain for lunch, and after lunch we had a long talk.

I then retreated to bed again and actually had a little sleep. Towards five o'clock Averescu asked to see me, and although I would have preferred being left alone to-day as I need a little peace to recover my strength, I am accustomed to do my duty to the bitter end, so I had to receive him.

He came in the hope that he might find me more resigned to the idea he represents, but he found me just as desperately unhappy as the last time we met. He argued each point out with me, slowly, methodically ; his arguments were much stronger than mine, reason written with a large R was on his side, he had everything on his side except what one calls the faith that removes mountains.

After having tried every possible persuasion only to find that my grief and despair were unabated, he finally confessed that he could not understand my point of view.

"Never mind, General," I said, "don't rack your brain ; I will give you an explanation which my old English nurse found for me when she once discovered me in a paroxysm of grief : 'Your Majesty minds so much because she is English and the English never can give up.' Take that as explanation, General, if you can understand no other ; I am English, a race that cannot give up."

He left me sadly, regretfully, but not as my enemy I hope. Men are generally not my enemies, but nowadays everything is so strange and dark that all is possible. Perhaps it would have been wiser if I had been calmer, more indifferent, more conciliatory, more in sympathy with his aims ; but my irresistible love of truth makes of me a bad diplomat, though I can generally move people just because of that eloquence of absolute truth so seldom found, and especially so seldom expressed.

It was a sad interview which left a heavy weight on my heart. He sees our only hope, our only salvation, in what I consider bitter humiliation and darkest misfortune ; he doesn't see it like that, and he may be right and I wrong, but as I said to him : "I have made myself too completely one with the ideal with which we had started out to be

able to conceive happiness for our country in any other way."

Jassy, Tuesday, February 13th/26th, 1918.

The poor King has a terrible ordeal before him to-day. Czernin has asked to see him in the name of his Emperor. The King's Government considers that he had better agree to meet him. Prince Stirbey has worked up point for point all that the King will have to say to Czernin. We pored over these points with the utmost care and anxiety. The future of the country is at stake!

I hate the thought that Nando should have to see Czernin. The meeting is to take place at General Averescu's house at Bacau.

Jassy, Wednesday, February 14th/27th, 1918.

At last I have had news of Ducky through England. She is in Finland and up to the present she has not been much molested; the Crown Prince of Sweden is trying to help them to get away, but without success for the present. They are in continual danger.

Jassy, Thursday, February 15th/28th, 1918.

Nando came back at one last night, but I only saw him this morning.

I anxiously watched how he came up the stairs; by the way he walked, by the expression on his face, I immediately knew that the ordeal had been terrible. But it was only after breakfast when I could take him alone into my room that he told me how it had been.

It was awful, in every way awful. Czernin was barely polite; he can be pleasant enough when he wants, but even in better days there had been something supercilious about him, so it can be well imagined what he was like during this interview.

He gave Nando no hope at all; the peace conditions are absolutely unacceptable, but if we do not agree to them, we are, according to them, to be swept off the face of the earth. The country is to disappear, to be divided up amongst Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Turkey. If Nando does

not want to accept peace now and at the terms they dictate, then the two Emperors wish him to know that they will pursue him with relentless resentment and never more lift a hand to protect him or any member of his family.

Personally, I had never been able to bear the thought of Nando seeing the man. I always considered it a humiliating proceeding, but Nando feels that he must do everything for his country, even things that humiliate him personally. Perhaps he is right. I am no judge, but I have the feeling lately that those around him have been sapping his courage and confidence in his country's strength and loyalty.

Personally, I much prefer an enemy who is frankly beastly to an enemy all smiles, who has nevertheless an iron hand ready to strangle you after having induced you to treat for peace. Of course our position is so tragic that it is almost fantastic, but I for one prefer *la guerre à outrance*, with final defeat, to treating with those whose only dream is to make slaves of us for the next fifty years at least. I may be wrong, but this is my way of looking at things; I cannot help the blood which flows in my veins. Now at least because of Czernin's attitude we see more clearly; therefore am I less depressed than I was a few days ago.

After dinner I had another long talk with the King; Averescu is going to ask for a personal interview with the Emperor of Austria.

Jassy, Friday, February 16th/March 1st, 1918.

Had a tremendous ride with Alice Cantacuzène. I was riding Ardeal, my beautiful white thoroughbred; he was a bit of a handful and gave me almost more exercise than I needed, but I brought him back at a reasonable pace after a few mighty gallops to calm his ardour.

I saw General Prezan. I wanted to cheer the King up, but I believe our military position is utterly impossible; the Austrians are marching into the north of Bessarabia; we are entirely encircled. However desperately courageous and foolhardy we might be, he fears that there is absolutely nothing to be done. What then? Let us hope at least that if we are to die, it should be *en beauté*.

Jassy, Saturday, February 17th/March 2nd, 1918.

The King came to me early with a face ravaged by anxiety and told me that the answer from Vienna was that they refused to treat with us upon any other basis than the one they had proposed, and they desired an answer before twelve o'clock. Nando was in a dreadful state, and alas, we could not quite agree in the way we looked at things. He has a great desire to consult with me, and yet I feel that I terrify him because of my passionate attitude; I can never be lukewarm. He is to have a Crown Council this morning at ten, to which all political parties have been invited. I felt that the King was being pushed into this unprepared and was appalled, unable to plan how I could protect him at such short notice. I tried, however, to inspire him with all the courage possible; but I am so afraid he has lost faith. Tragic moments when I wish I were a man! Nothing would have induced me to go unprepared and unprotected to preside at that terrible sitting.

Although full of anguish, I had a busy day and made the acquaintance of a very interesting Canadian, a certain Colonel Boyle, who is working for us in Russia, trying to better our situation, and especially our transport. A curiously fascinating man who is afraid of nothing, and who by his extraordinary force of will and fearlessness manages to get through everywhere; a real Jack London type.

The King appeared very late for lunch. Prince Stirbey came to me and we sat together in mortal anxiety, waiting to know what had happened at the Crown Council.

When the King *did* come, all he had to say was completely unsatisfactory; in spite of the length of the sitting, nothing really conclusive had been settled. Nando was very weary, so I hardly dared press him to give me a clear description of what had taken place; besides, Nando is never very lucid when summing up a situation, for words do not come easily to him.

I felt despair invade my soul, felt that I was struggling against overwhelming odds, and that everything was being done the wrong way about. It's a frightful feeling to be at a loss and not know how to help. Yet I know that I

shall do something, that I must do something, but what? What? To whom can I turn for help? How must I act?

Carol has come back from his regiment. I put him *au courant* of what was going on and we consulted together. The generals are, it seems, for resistance, and they have all gone back to their posts to organize this. What is going to happen? It is enough to drive me crazy!

I do not even dare put into words what I feel; one must be careful at moments of violent suffering not to judge people too harshly; it is better to wait, watch, and be continually ready to spring in when necessary with all the force of one's conviction and faith. But I am tortured!

I only wish that political men were not so personal in their every attitude. They ought to be able to rise above their dislike for one another and think of the cause rather than of themselves, and I, alas, am but a woman, but a woman. . . .

To-day my children brought me the first flowers of spring.

Jassy, Sunday, February 18th/March 3rd, 1918.

Had a painful scene with the King. He came late for breakfast; had already finished mine and was talking to Carol in my room explaining to him the exact situation, as he was also to be at the Crown Council of this morning. The King asked what we were talking about, and I told him that I thought Carol ought to know what was going on, and then, woman-like, I had my say. Impossible to repeat all the words I used, they were strong and to the point, but not pleasant to hear; and the King violently resented my attitude. The encounter was bitter and left scars.

Probably I was too passionate, for that, alas, is my way, but there are things Nando had to know, and who else but I could tell him what I told him this morning? As an example of my language I must quote these words which I cried out in the paroxysm of my despair:

"If we are to die, let us die with heads high, without soiling our souls by putting our names to our death

warrant. Let us die protesting, crying out to the whole world our indignation against the infamy which is expected of us."

Carol behaved very well: without in the least sharing my violence, he yet sustained me in the telling of those truths his father had to hear, and which no one was independent enough to tell him. There was health in the prophet of old who dared to stand up in the open street warning the people not to sell their souls to the devil.

All day we went through excruciating fluctuations of hope and despair.

At one moment I thought I had won the day, because whilst the King was at his Council, a horrible telegram was brought from the Germans, piling up the infamy of their conditions so that the King finally considered them unacceptable.

This, coming on top of the scene I had made this morning, induced the King to declare that he could come to no immediate decision and that he begged of his councillors to consider the terms the enemy were offering and come back to-morrow for fresh discussion.

This news filled me with new hope, as I considered it a direct sign from heaven that this message should have been brought just at that moment, and to all those I met during the day I confided this hope, and my heart exulted exceedingly.

But at six came Averescu, and with him death to my new-born hope. I think it best to draw a veil over this conversation with Averescu. I can only say that this interview with our Prime Minister, at the end of that day already too full of emotions, was one of the bitterest and most tragic hours of my life; dark as death!

Jassy, Monday, February 19th/March 4th, 1918.

During a night of torture a thought took root in my mind: I must get Carol to carry my word of protest to the Crown Council which is to be held to-day. Early in the morning I called Carol to me, careful to keep secret from everyone what I was doing, and begged him to stand up in the middle of the sitting and to protest in my name, and in the name of

all the women of Roumania, against the horror of peace in such a form.

The Council was a very painful one, I believe. The King made his declaration that, as no one upheld him for resistance, he was ready to accept the painful conditions, being unable to unite a government for defence. Carol gave my message bravely, and when he came back he fell on my neck thanking me for having allowed him, through my words, to express his own feeling.

But it is all over now, no one rallies for resistance; it is considered folly by all those who would have to take the responsibility (excluding the generals whose advice was not definitely asked).

Everybody came to me to-day: Jorga, the generals, Ballif, Delavrancea, Ellen Perticari, Anderson and others besides: my tired brain can hardly remember. It was numb with pain.

Nando and I could hardly face each other, he was a completely broken man. I did not try to argue any more; I knew that all was over; I knew that I was defeated.

Fearful thoughts came to me. I was ready for any sacrifice, for any desperate move. There is something in me, perhaps the blood of unknown ancestors, which makes me unable to bend my neck or to accept certain things. It is hard to be built this way.

And then the terrible thought came to me that I must try and make the King abdicate rather than put his name to that infamous peace.

Nobody can comfort me to-day, I am made that way; even the greatest love and kindness shown to me to-day is only like soft music round my heart that has been too cruelly bruised, it cannot help me in my grief.

And all the Allies have received orders to leave. It is one of the German conditions.

Jassy, Wednesday, February 21st/March 6th, 1918.

I try to be calm, to accept the hideous reality: but inside me there is a continual storm threatening to burst forth at any moment and to tear my reason away with it. I am unresigned, fiercely and completely unresigned! And there is

no argument that makes me believe that we are doing right, or anyhow, that it has been done in the right way.

My morning was a continual series of painful interviews till at a quarter past twelve I received the English Military Mission, come to take leave of me. General Ballard was always amongst those who for a long time saw our end coming and who tried to make England realize it and accept it.

Of course this meeting with all those nice, quiet, clean, strong Englishmen was dreadfully upsetting. They quite well knew to what they are leaving us. But on the whole I managed to pull through the terrible ordeal without outwardly losing my calm.

I decorated Mr. Baker of the Red Cross in the King's name. The general made quite a short speech, then in a tremendous chorus they sent up three cheers for the Queen of Roumania: Hip, hip, hurrah! All through the day people came to say good-bye to me, and each time it was as though my heart were being torn from my body.

One of the most upsetting interviews was with General Berthelot. We talked like two good soldiers who understood each other and who wept over the same irreparable mistakes, and deplored the inexorable fate which had beaten us at every turn, gradually tearing from us every particle of hope.

Jassy, Thursday, February 22nd/March 7th, 1918.

My kind friend Anderson has also received orders to leave: all our Allies are to leave! We had a big military lunch at the King's house, receiving all the important French officers. Berthelot made a moving speech, and we all sobbed, whilst he himself could hardly talk because of the tears that were rolling down his chubby cheeks.

It was horrible, but we felt such a spirit of warm friendship amongst all those men, and we knew that they were going away broken-hearted, not having been able to save our poor, brave Roumania from a ghastly fate.

We had a tea at the English Mission, rendered almost gay in spite of our misery, because of the simple English hospitality which always promotes a feeling of home. In each grown Englishman there survives something of the schoolboy. For instance, we were immediately led to see their cows, horses

and geese, their whole farmyard. The tea was excellent and plentiful, and afterwards, to Nicky and Ileana's delight, an excellent conjuror was produced. The children would have liked to have remained indefinitely, but we had to get home, for others were waiting for us.

This afternoon, after lunch, Simky and I read the conditions of peace proposed to us, telegraphed on from Nauen, the German news centre. The insolent tone with which they declare that all these conditions have already been accepted by Roumania, filled us with frantic shame: it was hardly to be borne.

In spite of all that I was feeling, I had to give a big party after dinner, uniting under one roof most of the French, English and Americans who were leaving.

I moved about amongst them as though I had one body but two personalities. The one was smiling, officially resigned to her fate, speaking of future reunions; the other was one gasping, seething revolt, ready for any desperate actions if I could only hinder the advancing disaster.

Colonel Boyle, the Canadian, was amongst our guests. He was very much like a rock in a stormy sea.

There was some music, much talk and our actress, Ventura, recited patriotic verses. We served an excellent buffet, but to me it was all acutest torture, though outwardly I remained calm and smiling. Finally we all parted at about half-past one, and then Carol came and sat for a long time with me and we ate our hearts out in fierce but impotent despair, vowing to each other that we would still try to prevent the worst, even were we to go to pieces in the effort.

Jassy, February 23rd/March 8th, 1918.

No words can describe the tragedy we are living through. We are like a body of which the clothes have been caught in a machine that is relentlessly dragging it ever nearer certain death.

This morning Carol and I had another talk with the King. We once more tried to persuade him to do what we consider right and honourable, but he cannot. Probably he knows things we do not know, so we can only look on and try to bear the weight of our despair.

Spent a terrible morning saying good-bye to all the foreigners who are to start to-morrow evening, who are to abandon us as we are no more allowed to stand up for our freedom.

Colonel Anderson brought me his whole unit and I decorated many of them with the Regina Maria Cross.

My kindly friend made a touching little speech to which I answered in words through which my pain welled up like an over-bubbling spring. We all had tears in our eyes and many were sobbing, pain seemed to be engulfing us like a dark flood. Then General Prezan came and we talked like two soldiers. He promised to take a message from me to the King; it is ghastly the way nothing can make me give in or give up!

Rather late I went over to the King's house, where we had a big lunch for the English and the Italians. There is a certain simplicity about the English which makes things quiet and undramatic; they take our awful situation as one of the cruel episodes in this formidable War, an episode they mean to wipe out with the victory they are so persuaded they will win. They all swore to me that on that day my poor, torn, mutilated country would not be forgotten. May God take them at their word! They are strong, faithful and true, and mean to stick it out. Never have I felt so passionately an Ally as at this hour when everything has been torn from my hands and when we are slipping out of their ranks.

After tea I sent for Berthelot and told him how I had tried to move the King, that I implored him not to hurry away his Military Mission, that perhaps even now at the eleventh hour, the situation could still be saved. I used every word a woman can use when she stands before a disaster she hopes to hold back. The old man was deeply moved. I do not know if he thought there was any hope, but clasping my hand in his enormous grip, he promised me he would go and talk to the King.

Then came Prince Stirbey. I tried to fire him with my last dying spark of hope. He looked at me half in pity, half in admiration, marvelling at that flame which never dies in me and that ever again urges me to new effort.

"You see," I said, "it is a lack of faith that is losing

our country, that is sapping its courage and which induces so many to bow their heads before disaster. My English blood refuses to accept disaster. If there remains the smallest, most meagre fighting chance, I shall still fight,—a losing battle, no doubt, but I would consider myself unworthy of my own ideals were I to give in before I am completely convinced that all is lost.”

There is a mighty force in belief, a mighty strength in a straight road which one follows *coûte que coûte* ; it is the by-ways that lead us astray.

Colonel Boyle came to dinner and after dinner all the favourite friends assembled around us for the last time for a little music.

Just as I was receiving them I was brought a terrible message : I think I will not say here what it was, but to me it seemed like a death-blow. I rallied, however, as is my way, and tried to undo the wrong which I thought was being done. Carol and Prince Stirbey stood by me and we discussed together in what way we could do that which had to be done.

This almost silent drama was being enacted whilst in the next room Enescu was playing marvellous music. I moved from place to place as in some ghastly dream, but my every nerve was taut for whatever fight might be coming,—alert, ready, watchful.

It is not for me to describe every phase of that fight I fought that night with Carol and Stirbey at my side. We strained every nerve, every sense for a last and desperate effort to make others do what we considered right.

But I played my last card and—lost !

Thereupon I threw myself into a corner of Elisabetta's large sofa and asked Enescu to play us Lequeux's symphony, and there, surrounded by the friends who to-morrow are to leave us to our humiliation and despair, I listened with all my soul to that superhumanly exquisite music, and in its every note I seemed to hear the agony of our dying country, and mixed with it was the wounded and yet still unbroken energy of a queen who had tried to do her utmost to lead her people on what she considered the path of honour.

This too was a tragic hour. I sat there surrounded by those who represented all my hope and pride, all my right of

a free queen, fighting for a cause she believed in, and still believes in, in spite of oft-repeated, crushing disaster.

Enescu stood calm amidst the storm and played like a god one of the most glorious pieces of music ever written, and it was as though with his violin he were sobbing out into the night all the grief of my soul which I was unable to express in words.

And from all the four corners of the room faithful, affectionate eyes were fixed upon me, the eyes of strong men who could find no words, but who knew that they were leaving me and our country to an overwhelming disaster which none had been able to hold back, and I knew that at this hour I was to them the living symbol of the country which was being so cruelly abandoned to its fate.

Jassy, Saturday, February 24th/March 9th, 1918.

All night long I had the prayer on my lips: "Dear God, prevent my friends being sent away, do not ask of me this bitterest of sacrifices, not all of them at once, all those men who were the symbol of our freedom, of our right to be amongst the living." Ever again I woke with that same prayer on my lips: "Dear God, do not let them go!"

Yet in spite of my ardent prayers the first thing I heard this morning was that they were leaving, all of them, this very day in five different trains, the first of which was to start about 10 a.m.

Being the fighter that I am, even then at the last hour when all was lost, I still struggled to stand up against events. But it was all in vain! Although I strained every nerve, every particle of my brain and energy, in this also I was destined to fail; one train after another started, and as the hours passed, hope became less and less, and the agony of my heart increased till it was an intolerable, burning torture. All my ideas are upset, there are certain things my mind does not, will not, cannot accept.

And they all came, one after another, to say good-bye, *tous les petits soldats de la France*, even those I didn't know came, begging for photographs to take away with them: "Un souvenir de cette Reine qui est devenue un peu notre

Reine, à travers qui nous verrons toujours ce beau pays de Roumanie."

So many said it to me in different words : " Nous aimons votre pauvre, pauvre Roumanie, et nous vous aimons, vous. Vous restez notre drapeau planté sur le sol roumain, c'est pour vous, à travers votre image que là-bas nous luttrons pour votre pays. . . ."

And many more such words which were balm to my grief. One after another they came, high and low, officers, doctors and soldiers, and all of them had tears in their eyes, and all of them clung to my hands and cried out their grief at having to leave me, to forsake me in my hour of distress, to abandon a woman. . . .

I had met them here, there, everywhere, during these last eighteen months in the different corners of my torn and bleeding country, in sunshine and rain, in summer and winter. I was with them in sickness and pain during our retreat and our building up again. We upheld each other through faith and hope and in a mutual effort we strained every nerve to try and overcome a relentless fate but disaster overwhelmed us, all our courage was given in vain.

Amongst the many who came to take leave of me was also my friend Anderson. He is to be swept away with the rest, that staunch upholder of my ideals, that kind man who from the first hour of his arrival had become the most faithful of my subjects, working for me and through me, he too a fighter who understood honour in the same way as I did.

Yes, he too came to say good-bye, he even came twice, unable to tear himself away from the Queen he had sworn to help. He was a gallant man with a certain old-time courtesy about him, rarely found in our days, the real Virginian, with all Virginia's high tradition and aristocratic point of view. Yes, he too came to say good-bye, and I saw how his heart was wrung and how his soul revolted against this going away which was like an abandonment.

In the afternoon, Pierre Reindre and the Comte de Rochefort came together, broken-hearted, full of emotion, entirely overcome with grief in fact. Then Dr. de Vaux, also a great friend, and Colonel Marshal, and finally precious old Berthelot himself.

We had understood each other, he and I; the somewhat masculine intransigence of my nature had met his soldier's soul half-way; for him too the word *honour* had only one meaning.

Our interview was short; all that we had to say to each other had already been said, and this was simply a final hand-clasp, a final good-bye. I said to him, I, the Queen:

"Mon général, je ne suis pas un officier en uniforme, vous ne me décorez pas avec La Légion d'Honneur, mais moi aussi, à ma façon, j'ai été un bon soldat qui a fait son devoir; ne pourriez-vous pas me donner l'accolade?"

And I found myself suddenly pressed against his ample bosom and both my cheeks were kissed with two heartfelt and resounding kisses. Never have I been pressed to so ample a bosom!

I think Berthelot was the last—and after he departed I went into my daughter's room and wept, wept as though all my life long I would do nothing more but weep over this thing which I cannot forgive; this sending away of the friends who had come to fight for us, this parting with all those who represented our cause, our right to the road of victory.

And all this agony and this gradual dying of our hopes was, in other proportions, a repetition of the illness and death of Mircea sixteen months ago.

I persuaded Nando, although this was not favourably looked upon by our Government, to go with me and the children to see the last train start and to say good-bye to Berthelot and his Mission. As they were not to leave till after midnight, Colonel Boyle, who had been dining with us, came and sat with me, and I tried to let myself be steeled by the man's relentless energy, tried to absorb some of the quiet force which emanates from him. I poured out my heart to him during those hours he sat with me. I do not know all that I told him, the memory is a blur, but I made a clean breast of all my grief and when he left me and I said that everyone was forsaking me he answered very quietly, "But I won't," and the grip of his hand was as strong as iron.

I have also a numbed and confused remembrance of that final good-bye at the far-off station, which we reached by driving miles through the dark night. Those who were leav-

ing were deeply touched, for they had not expected that the King and his family would come to say this last supreme good-bye, and I think that, in a way, it softened for them some of the bitterness of this tragic departure.

The return home was the return of defeated hearts which had let hope die, and always I seemed to see a vision of that last train dwindling away into the night . . . we had been abandoned.

Chapter XXVI

DEFEATED BUT NOT SUBDUED

Jassy, Sunday, February 25th/March 10th, 1918.

A BLANK day, a day of tears, a day of passionate revolt. All day I lay on my bed and did not accept my fate ; I submit to it but I do not accept it—no, no, no, I do not accept it !

Many people came to see me, as in a dream they came, one face after another, but my tears and my pain stood between them and me, so I have but a vague remembrance of great mental suffering and of a body that although dead-tired was as unresigned as was my mind.

Ballif also came and I gave him the Regina Maria Cross, and told him it was a decoration he would not be ashamed of wearing.

And all day long they came, all those who had been most faithful, and it was as though they were paying me visits of condolence for the death of something very dear, for had not yesterday been the burying of all our hopes ?

A long, long day dark with pain and revolt.

The period which followed was so dark that I would weary my readers if I asked them to follow me through my daily grief.

I was passionately and fiercely unresigned, and not easy to live with just then. I had enough sense left to feel this, so I avoided as much as possible meeting those who represented government or authority, coming together with them only on those unavoidable occasions when my queenly duties obliged me to ; otherwise I continued seeing many people and I worked harder than ever.

But something in me was crushed. I was made for resistance, but resignation was impossible to me. I was a

brave, if not always an absolutely disciplined, fighter, but I was not a diplomat. For the moment I was beaten, this I had to recognize. Beaten yes, but not broken, oh, no, not broken! I was, in fact, biding my time, relentlessly attached to my one steady ideal, though for the present it was quite impossible to see whence light might again come to us.

Work was my refuge. There was more than enough to do. Colonel Anderson had left me all the American Red Cross provisions, a glorious inheritance, but a heavy responsibility, as only one helper remained, a queer old Russian general, Verblunski, who had worked on Anderson's staff and in whom he had great faith. I put him together with Mamulea, and although we sorely missed our departed collaborators, we managed to go ahead.

To-day everything was pain to me and I was looked upon askance by those actually in power, and when Averescu resigned, to be replaced by a Marghiloman cabinet, I found it very difficult to bear the contact with those who came from Bucarest with German sympathies.

Once I had to go with the King for the swearing-in of the new recruits. I could hardly bear this ordeal, I could not resign myself to the fact that we had had to lay down our arms.

I almost envied those who *could* be resigned, but in my heart of hearts I also slightly despised them.

I do not pretend that I was entirely normal just then, but as these pages are a faithful tale of my life, I must relate things as they really were.

As misfortune never comes alone, I had also at that time the great grief of losing faithful Sœur Pucci, who was gradually dying of a terrible form of cancer. I was with her continually, and she clung to me in her suffering; to her, at least, I could be a comfort.

M. Mișu, our Minister from London, arrived in Jassy and it was a real relief to have him amongst us and to get news from "the land of the living." From this time on Mișu was closely associated with our lives and was the greatest help. He was a man of outstanding intelligence, but almost incredibly modest and unassuming. Having few illusions left, he was inclined to sarcasm in his judgment of others, but this

not from any dryness of heart, but rather because of a philosophical, somewhat sceptical attitude he had towards life. Desiring nothing for himself, he slightly despised those who had not yet reached his degree of selflessness. Mişu seemed to be detached from all things, to look at them from a distance, as though no man and no event were in direct contact with his inner being.

When the Allies were obliged to forsake us, I sent a message to King George by Captain Barrett, one of the officers of the British Military Mission, and received a kind answer.

As I knew that we were to lose our postal independence I wanted to send a last cry of distress to that very dear kinsman beyond the Western Front, where terrible battles were being fought and where the Germans were concentrated for their last mighty effort. It was at this time that their huge cannon, *die dicke Berta*, made its first appearance. It can easily be imagined with what breathless anxiety we followed events.

Message sent to King George :

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I would be very grateful if you would receive Captain Barrett, so that he can tell you all those things I cannot write.

Our agony has been fearful : cut off, betrayed, encircled by enemies, we have had to give up, in spite of the high spirit of our troops, in spite of our unshakable fidelity to our mutual cause, in spite of our fortitude in the face of impossible odds.

I for one did all that was in my power ; your Englishmen will tell you how I struggled to the last, even when everyone else had given up, trying to save what could not be saved, how I never lost faith and was ready to accept every sacrifice and to face any danger ; but it was all in vain.

Luck was against us, not a single event came to our rescue. I saw every hope crumble ; we had no one and nowhere to turn, and we have known everything of pain, suffering and disappointment. The tale is too long to tell, others will tell it, and you over there, on the winning side, will fight for us who tried to fight for you. You will fight and win, and on the day of victory do not forget us.

Until that blessed hour, good-bye, George, I am going out to meet a fate, almost too dark to be conceived.

Rather would I have died with our army to the last man, than confess myself beaten, for have I not English blood in my veins ?

Your loving cousin,
Missy.

In response to this message I received much later, as my message had a long way to go, this telegram as answer :

It is with feelings of deep sympathy with you both in your times of adversity that I have received your message of the 16th inst.

Mingled with these feelings is the intense admiration that I share with my people of the heroic efforts made by the gallant Roumanian Army against the overwhelming forces which encircled it.

You may be confident that we and our Allies will do our utmost to redress the grievous wrongs Roumania has suffered in the great cause for which we went to war.

GEORGE.

18th March, 1918.

Jassy, Friday, March 2nd/15th, 1918.

Got up bravely to face the world, the sunshine and the day's sorrow ; this last is overwhelming, unbearable, each day heavier.

I had a long talk with Ballif, and he tried to make me see that the unbearable is bearable, but I cannot see it ; besides, they none of them really know how fearful are the conditions of peace imposed upon us ; each day worse, each day the noose round our necks tightens. It seems the post and the telegraph is to be in their hands, and to-day they sent in a list of the people they expect us to banish from the country.

I received two soldiers who had escaped from the enemy's side to bring us news. For me they had brought a piece of stuff on which verses had been written for the Queen, by those who had remained faithful in Bucarest.

This morning I composed three telegrams : one to the King of England, one to the President of the American Red Cross, and the third to Dr. Ellis, the nice American who was here last autumn. In each telegram I begged them not to forget Roumania, even if a dreadful and deadly silence were from now onwards to cut us off from the living, for one of the worst conditions is that they want to prevent all communication with the outside world. It is not peace ; it is foreign occupation, it is living death, it is strangulation. I cannot bear it.

I am losing myself, I am sinking into darkness like one who has lost too much blood ; no one helps me, no one *can* help me. I am sinking down, and all my life and energy, my

pride and courage are useless before this thing which is being done to my country.

Many people come to talk to me, giving me useless advice, or asking me for help I can no more give. I feel so empty to-day; how can I give?

Soon it will be complete slavery and then there will be no more a place for me under the sun. I am not made to be a slave, to buckle under, to grovel!

I am on the verge of madness: sometimes I think that to slide over into complete madness would be an infinite and wonderful relief.

Outwardly to others I seem to be the same Queen as I was a few weeks ago; but they do not know what a stranger I have become: I have become an explosive mass of revolt, but if I burst it would only be my own destruction, and who would care?

I am going down—going down. . . .

Jassy, Sunday, March 4th/17th, 1918.

The sun shines gloriously, but despair creeps ever nearer my heart. My world is sinking. I have nothing to hold on to, all I believed in is crumbling, all I hoped for is gone to pieces; they are even destroying the future for me, because I feel as though we were selling our souls to the enemy.

General Grigorescu came to see me, and he so belongs to better days that the sight of him nearly broke me down. He could bring me no consolation. He still has a few illusions but he does not know as much as I do. He was horribly shocked to find such a change in me since our last happy meeting in Barlad and Tecuci; those two days now seem to belong to impossibly happy times, and yet even then my heart was heavy with fear, but not with the despair of to-day. Later I went with Mignon to see Sœur Pucci. I sat a long while beside her, my hand in hers. Sœur Pucci is dying; she is going very rapidly now; she too is leaving me, soon she also will be gone.

She can no more leave her bed and is wasting away, each hour a little more; she can take no nourishment, she is dying of starvation in horrible tortures, and we can do nothing for her except to let her feel our love.

I came home with Mignon ; in the motor, we sat hand in hand. We have no more words, our world is crumbling about us ; there is a vast and terrible mistake somewhere—but where ?

Stirbey came to tea. We sat contemplating a future we do not understand, nor do we know how long we shall still be together ; the unknown lies before us, but before we reach it who knows what we shall still have to go through ?

Went to bed early, as one whose soul has parted from her body : besides, I have a bad throat and a bad cough. I am no longer Regina Maria—I am someone quite different, someone who knows no more who she is, who has no more place under the sun. . . .

Jassy, Monday, March 5th/18th, 1918.

Had a long talk with Ballif this morning. He tries to prevent my nursing the idea of leaving the country, anyhow not suddenly, not violently, nor as a manifestation. Perhaps he is right. I'll see : I do not know what I shall do. A part of my people will, of course, still need me, will consider me their only hope ; the only link with the past so many still cling to. We will see. For the moment it is all dark : *je subis les événements*, I can no longer control them, but certainly at hours when I am calmer I see that as long as I can in any way still represent something for the good cause, I must keep myself in reserve. I must not give way to do anything desperate that would cut me entirely off from my country and people ; but in my first hours of furious despair it would have been a relief to smash everything to pieces ; *on voit rouge*, and violent and desperate action alone seem possible ; alas, I am built that way, I am *toute d'une pièce*.

This morning Nando received Marghiloman, who is forming the new Government. He has not yet asked to see me ; I am dreading this more than anything else, for he is a link with the enemy and therefore utterly and completely intolerable to me.

Jassy, Tuesday, March 6th/19th, 1918.

To-day Nando received the swearing in of the new Government—the Marghiloman Government.

With this the King turns over a new leaf ; I lie in wait to see what will follow. I am full of mortal anxiety and I am torn to pieces with the perplexity of how I should behave. Generally I know so exactly how I mean to behave ; now I am walking in the dark on ground full of snares. My own ideals, my own faith, my own idea of honour are unshakably the same, only I do not know how to serve them to-day, how still to be *Le drapeau des Alliés planté sur le sol roumain*. How, how ? I must see, I must gradually find out.

No doubt I have not yet suffered enough ; I must take this too upon myself, this is the most intolerable of all. Now that I am calmer and that I feel less as though my mind were giving way, I know that I shall be ready to bear anything as long as I can keep the fire of our cause alive in the hearts of my people.

This morning I received a queer little Jew, a tremendously rich man who wants to put his fortune at my disposal ! Yesterday he had been to Nando proposing that the nation should offer the King a golden mantle studded with gems and a jewelled sword such as would be seemly for a sovereign ! Nando gently persuaded him that this was not quite the moment for such a gift, that it would be better to build a sanatorium for consumptives. This he immediately agreed to do. To me he used the same language, but he went still further ; he wanted me to choose other charities which interested me, anything I desired, and he would run the financial side of everything, which was not to worry me in the least. What is he after ?

The whole conversation was impregnated with something fantastically unreal. It is not every day that a man comes and implores you as a great favour to put your hands into his money-bags. We finally stuck to the idea of the consumptive sanatorium, and also an organization for helping the poor families in Bessarabia, and later perhaps something for the invalids.

Sir George Barclay brought me a most affectionate telegram from King George, in which he says he understands our desperate situation and promises to uphold us in spite of our present disastrous predicament.

After lunch I received a deputation from the arsenal,

come to present me with a marvellous money-box specially constructed for me which could only be opened by a special trick. I was much touched, but I also smiled, because it is a huge box and would take some time to fill ; they had put a hundred francs into it, as it seems a money-box or a purse must never be given empty. I do not, however, see Regina Maria filling a money-box, only emptying it. How keep a full money-box when the world's need keeps knocking at your door ?

This deputation was followed by General Vaitoianu, who touched me very much. He had come from afar to tell me not to despair ; he had come in the name of the army to declare to me that all the troops knew how bravely I had tried to uphold the nation's ideal, and said that I must not make myself ill with grief because the whole country needed me to-day just as much as they did yesterday and as they will need me to-morrow when our hour of revenge will come. I was deeply touched. I cannot say how grateful I was for these kind words at a moment when my whole world seemed falling to pieces.

Finally came the frightfully painful moment when I had to receive Marghiloman. He, of course, made it as easy as possible for me, as he is always so demonstratively amiable, and meets one more than half-way ; but for all his smiles it was a sinister feeling to know that however outwardly amiable we were to each other, our inner convictions make of us implacable adversaries. We talked of many things almost as though we were the friends we used to be, but beneath everything lay that terrible something which separates us more completely than if we were on two different spheres.

At last I got off with my two daughters to visit Sœur Pucci ; she is sinking rapidly, her voice is nearly gone, but her intelligence is as vivid, clear and unselfish as ever. Dear Sœur Pucci. Too much sadness, too much. . . .

Jassy, March 12th/25th, 1918.

The news from the Western Front is bad. The Germans have won a victory over the English, and the sensational news is that the Germans have invented some new and fearful sort of cannon, and have been bombarding Paris from a distance

of a hundred and twenty kilometres. One's heart stands still in fear. It is our future as well as theirs which is being played for over there : and such a fearful massacre of brave boys of every nationality ! How can humanity bear it ?

The Germans are also brave soldiers, *dass muss mann ihnen lassen* ! The opening of each telegram becomes a trembling anxiety ; there has been too much misfortune, too much. One cannot believe that any good news can come any more. *Pour le moment c'est le triomphe du mal.*

In the night I was called to Sœur Pucci's bedside ; she was very bad, but did not yet pass away, she has still to struggle on, still to suffer . . . why is it sometimes so difficult to die ?

Jassy, March 14th/27th, 1918.

Sœur Pucci died last night. I was with her up to the very end. I had brought her my own large pillows, because I could not bear to see her lying on those miserable hospital cushions. She died as she lived, a saint.

Jassy, Thursday, March 15th/28th, 1918.

Although not feeling very well, I got up for my dear old Sœur Pucci's burial service, a fine and dignified service in the Notre Dame de Sion chapel, and I shed real tears of profound sorrow and regret.

Dear Sœur Pucci, you meant something quite unique in my life ; now you are gone, gone at a moment when my heart has already relinquished so much. You promised to plead in heaven for me and my country, and I am sure you will. The single red lily I had brought you when you died was still quite fresh, and it was the only flower you had on your coffin, that red lily which is the emblem of Florence, the town from which you come.

They carried you off in a shabby black hearse with four lean, brown horses, nightmare animals out of a bad dream. But your coffin was covered with the French flag, and upon this flag lay my red lily all by itself. We all wept, even Carol ; he also had known you well, and loved you dearly since 1913, when we had worked together in the cholera

camp. Good-bye, dear old Sœur Pucci, good-bye, my old and very precious friend.

When I came home I received a Russian *sistritza* who is leaving, desperately sad and hopeless like all better thinking Russians. She was followed by good old General Verblunski to whom I gave the Regina Maria first class. He promptly fell on his knees in good old Russian style, and poured out a torrent of wonderful protestations of devotion and loyalty in incredible English. We looked through all his papers, which are in wonderful order; he was eager that I should see how faithfully he was carrying on the work entrusted to him.

The news from the Western Front is still anxious, though the English and French have not lost their heads and are making a splendid stand against overwhelming masses of Germans.

God help those who are also fighting for our liberty.

Jassy, Thursday, March 22nd/April 4th, 1918.

At twelve I received an audience which was painful, Costica Arion of the new Ministry. Of course he was charming, he always was a very charming gentleman, but my confidence has been shaken by recent events; I am no more the woman I was. A quite unknown thing has stolen into my loyal heart; mistrust. So now I hold myself in reserve. I cannot feel friendly or have complete confidence in anyone whom I suspect of being in sympathy with our enemy.

All those who are inclined to consider that we are justly punished for having undertaken a war which for me is still to-day as holy as it was yesterday (because I believed in the cause for which we were fighting and in the Allies on whose side we were fighting) cannot have my sympathy, nor be my friend. The fundamental ideal we started with is different. How then can we agree? Neither can I understand living on good terms with an enemy who forces us to accept *such* a peace!

I could not help telling Arion: "that if ever there was a *chiffon de papier*, this peace is one," and whilst saying this I made with my hands the gesture of tearing that *chiffon de papier* into a thousand little pieces.

He expressed great joy at meeting me again and I think his emotion was genuine. He called me "*notre Reine*" with a very special accent upon the *notre* ! I, on my side, very honestly told him *que je me tenais en réserve*, that for the moment I could not talk to him *à cœur ouvert*. Too much had happened, he must wait before I could be again the Regina Maria of former days.

What they must understand, however, before we can in any way collaborate, is that I do not in the least consider myself a beaten Queen who must recognize that she has been mistaken, but as the leader of a glorious army which has *not* been vanquished, but had to submit to a fearful and preposterous peace because it was betrayed by its Ally, Russia. This basis once accepted, we would then see how and if we could work together.

On the ex-front, March 25th/April 7th, 1918.

A very full day, I may even say a tiring day. The weather is too hot and too dry for the season. It is distressingly dry, and nothing can grow ; if it continues like this it will be a fresh disaster added to many others.

We began our activities at Comanesti, but I was awake long before and looked out of the window at the pretty landscape through which we were passing, the same landscape I had seen last summer, whilst the cannon were roaring all round the mountains. Now the cannon are still and we are much unhappier than we were last summer ! We passed through the entirely destroyed Targu Ocna, where some fruit trees were already in flower.

At half-past nine we had a big parade at Comanesti. All the troops looked so well, quite different from what they looked at this season last year, but to-day, what is the good ? No, my spirit is not resigned, with each day I am more turbulently desperate about everything. Each step I take into life now is acute grief, everything has become a torture to me, and the sight of our army of which I was so proud, tears my heart to pieces ; it is a veritable effort for me to go anywhere or to do anything.

The parade was a long business as the field was huge and we walked down the ranks, a tiring proceeding, and then

all the regiments in their turn marched past us. The horses looked miserable ; they have suffered more than the men.

Lunch was served to us in the castle of Comanești, a purely military lunch which did not last overlong. As I sat there amongst the officers I felt all my pain surging up within me so that I could almost have shrieked aloud. Never in all my life have I felt anything like what I am going through now ; sometimes I have the feeling I am going out of my mind.

In the afternoon we drove to the Cerișoiaia, right up to the top of the mountain where last autumn I had been in the trenches. We visited all the old positions and General Vaitoianu explained *sur place* all the battles. I was deadly sad, so sad that my body was made weary by my sadness ; I am physically and mentally weary.

The spring has gone out of me. I see nothing before me except a dark, impossible road upon which I am not yet resigned to walk.

Lonely little graves everywhere, nameless, scattered about here and there upon the battle-fields, facing in eternal solitude the glorious view from the mountain-top. And there where blood had been so freely shed, violets clustered in large patches ; it was as though they had specially chosen to bloom there where the young had bled to death. Grass and earth were all dusty grey, streaked here and there with those extraordinarily vivid-tinted violets. Perhaps their colour was so particularly bright because their roots had drunk of the blood of heroes ; at least that was the thought which came to me. We penetrated into the positions I had visited this autumn 'neath mist and falling leaves ; then it was a living world, palpitating with an ardent desire for action, every soldier sure of his strength and fired by the desire to beat the enemy. Now they are forsaken positions ; forsaken, but not surrendered in battle.

Opposite our trenches were the enemy's trenches, quite near by, hardly a few yards apart. Several Austrian soldiers and their officers came out and saluted us. Indeed a strange state of affairs !

It all makes my heart sick and my body weary ; I was near tears all the time. In fact, I hated going back to these

places, except that I was able to say a few prayers over those lonely soldier-graves.

I was getting very tired ; I am not in good condition at all, either morally or physically, but there was still much to do. Seated beside Nando in his motor we were driven down very steep roads, through the ruins of Targu Ocna, through Onești to the distant village of Casin where we opened a little peasant casino the army had built for the village. It was late when we drove back to Onești, and almost dark, but we still had a huge parade on a field near the station. Another endless review of the troops, but this time I did not do it on foot, because, unlike my usual self, I was very tired ; I hate being tired, I resent being below my usual level.

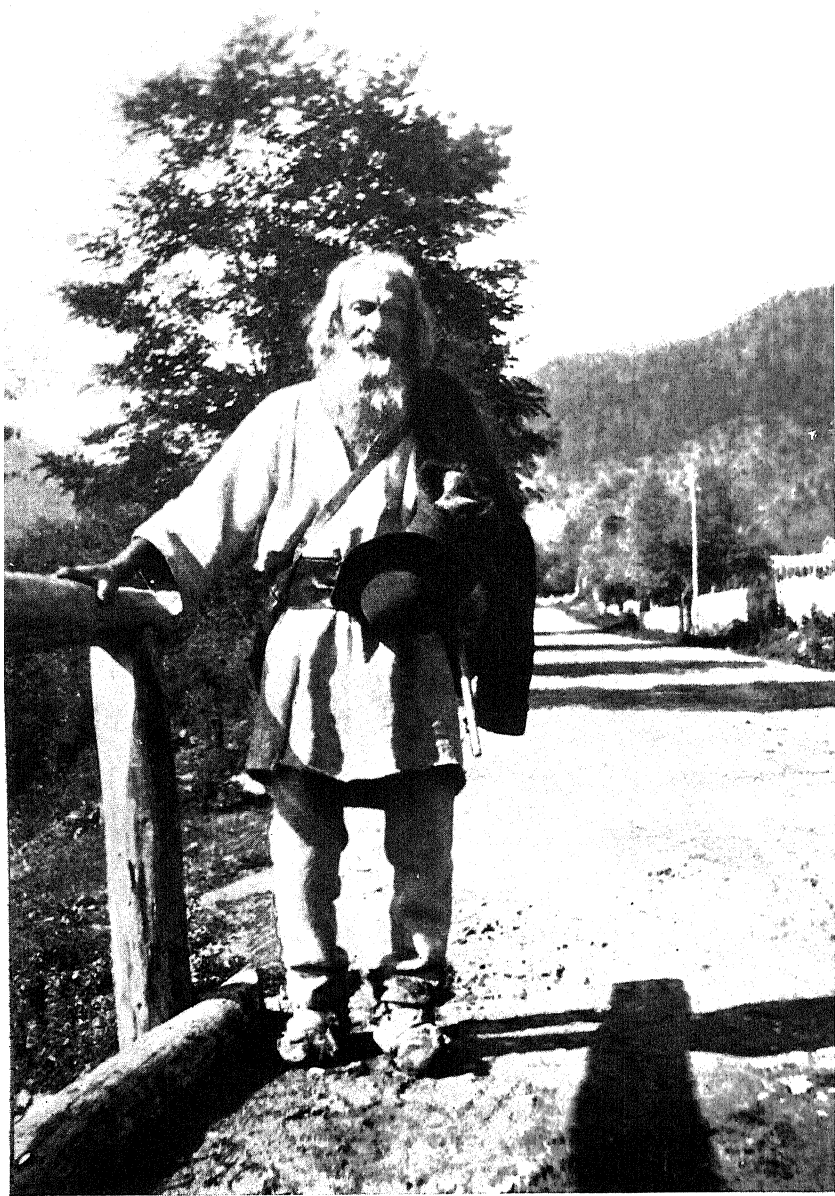
The parade was long. I stood it on my feet. The last part of it was drowned in the first shadows of night. There were many, many troops ; this was the first division, the generals were unknown to me.

On the ex-front, Monday, March 26th/April 8th, 1918.

Another long military day, first visiting my little Cotăfănești which had been burned down and was rebuilt and slightly enlarged. The weather was dull, almost chilly, so the dear place did not look its best. Precious little house, I am pleased that they have rebuilt it ; it can become a refuge to which I can flee when I am sick of town and its eternal talk.

Thence we drove to my friend Moșoiu's post of command, which Nando had never visited. All the places we passed reminded me of better days, of hopes that had been destroyed, of heroic but useless effort. In spite of all the fine words with which they try to console me, this end to me spells failure ; to me it is an end unworthy of our army's splendid courage !

But even my profound state of melancholy had to melt somewhat under the sun of Moșoiu's ogre-like smile, before his irresistible, unshaken optimism ; also the real sun came out and the heavens became radiant. All chilliness had gone out of the air and the sky was intensely blue, but the drought is dreadful, nowhere green grass or even a sign of leaves. If it would only rain once, the change would immediately be miraculous.



TYPICAL OLD PEASANT OF THE BISTRIȚA VALLEY.

All the morning we visited the forsaken trenches, and Vaitoianu took us to the different positions explaining the battles. This lasted till lunch-time.

With a feeling as though I were coming home, I took possession of my little room with the wonderful bed the soldiers had made for me ; they are going to keep this room intact. The lunch was plentiful and cheery. No misanthropical attitude can stand out against Moșoiu's over-exuberant good-humour and his confidence in the good things of life. He spreads around him an irresistible atmosphere of bonhomie and satisfaction.

At two we started off again to review the troops of the eighth division commanded by General Zadic, a thin little man who looks younger than he is and whom I had not known before.

After this we went to a place called Clegea. Wherever we passed the peasants trooped out of their houses and pelted us with quantities of humble violets and large white anemones. Nando drove at a tremendous pace, but as I sat beside him in front it was supportable. I got him, however, to slacken down in the villages and even to stop when the women had flowers in their hands, a great concession for a chauffeur.

At about five we arrived at the parade ground where we reviewed all the regiments. Afterwards we remained amongst the men and they had all sorts of amusements. They sang, danced and recited poetry. One man had a bear with which he wrestled. The bear looked like a man pretending to be a bear and was so funny that he made me laugh heartily. Nando also decorated some of the soldiers and officers whilst all the troops looked on, and finally began to edge nearer and nearer to us till we were shut in by a ring of dusty, eager-eyed little soldiers with their guns on their backs. They were delighted to be in such close contact with us.

Our day ended with a supper at General Zadic's quarters. The drive home to our station was very pretty. All along the road the troops had collected in groups round their fires, and as we drove past they all rushed towards the road with torches in their hands cheering with all their might. It was a charming sight. In Roumania everything is so exceedingly picturesque.

March 27th/April 9th, 1918.

This has been a day specially consecrated to the villages and peasants. Carol remained with me whilst Nando went on towards Tecuci to the First Army. We spent the whole day going from village to village visiting the different organizations helping the poor population. Several generals are doing good work. Part of the time I had my friend Moşoiu with me and part of the time Vaitoianu and his family who are working with my Regina Maria *équipes* which we now use in the villages ; Dr. and Madame Costinescu are foremost amongst these.

In the afternoon we came to Groseşti at the beginning of the Oituzi valley which had been continually under fire and which is now almost completely destroyed, and with it the Negroponte house on the hill above.

The unfortunate inhabitants are beginning to come back, but to find only ruins.

I went through the whole village on foot, going from house to house, or rather from family to family, because the houses are destroyed. The peasants sat with real Roumanian resignation upon heaps of cinders and the fallen-down walls of what had once been their homes. Instinctively each man had returned to his own little bit of ground. It was one of the most pathetic sights I had ever seen ; they were mostly women and children, and sad old men with long grey locks.

I wandered about amongst them and let them tell me their woes ; of course they complained and sighed saying that they were hungry and that their children were ill, but they were not a bit tragic, nor did they shed any tears. A little shrugging of shoulders whilst they crossed themselves, some pathetic words poetically expressed as is the way of Roumanian people, that was all.

Here the village was cut to pieces by trenches ; we climbed over several of them, but they were already beginning to mend the roads. There are still soldiers in the place, and not far away are the enemy trenches where I saw an Austrian sentry on guard.

Here and there near a heap of ruins, or an almost undamaged roof fallen to the ground, is a tree in full bloom,

and small violets pushing up through the cinders. A pathetic old mother with her grandchildren clustering about her knees, sits upon a broken door-step, hiding her mouth with her white head-cloth with that gesture so characteristic of the peasant woman ; a stray pig, a hen or a guileless puppy struts about, seeking nourishment among the rubbish ; sad sights, and they all seem to take it calmly, doggedly sticking to their own little corner, sheltering themselves beneath whatever bit of masonry is still found standing.

One house had been cut exactly in two, the front part was undamaged, which was considered lucky for the owners.

I also visited one of the big military graveyards, not far from the monastery Caşin in a deep little side valley. It is a bare, melancholy place, amongst low, barren hills, but beautifully tidy and cared for. There are several hundred graves with crosses made out of birch-wood, all of them the same size.

Each cross had a wreath of fir branches hung over its outstretched arms ; the wreaths had faded and had taken on the colour of rust. The sun was sinking, lighting up with its last rays the white crosses and the faded leaves which had become bright orange ; as a background the barren, dun-coloured hills, without a tree anywhere. It was a profoundly melancholy but intensely harmonious symphony of colour.

I wandered about for a long time amongst that silent host of crosses, wondering who was weeping or longing for those young beings who would never return to their homes, never again.

We drove back to Oneşti where I visited the hospital and also some of our prisoners who had returned from Hungary, a troop of shabby, bedraggled human beings, but physically not in quite such a bad state as had been described to me. But oh, how much suffering was stamped on those many unknown faces.

Jassy, Wednesday, March 28th/April 10th, 1918.

Bessarabia has declared herself annexed to Roumania, which causes great joy ; I also ought to rejoice, but I have lost the habit of rejoicing. I can only look ahead with fear, wondering what new trouble will arise out of this.

I came into the middle of loud demonstrations. My train arrived five minutes after Marghiloman's train; he had returned from Kishinev and had been received with much cheering, and there, on the platform, my Prime Minister and I, who are *en froid*, had to shake hands in public and congratulate each other as if all the world were a garden full of roses! Well, it must all the same be considered a happy event, as far as events go. Let us hope at least that it is definite.

Jassy, Friday, March 30th/April 13th, 1918.

A day of strange emotions, of outward rejoicing and inward misgivings.

The annexation of Bessarabia is, no doubt, a great event for our country. It is the first step towards the "Unire" of which Roumania dreams. It has come about in a quite unexpected way, by the falling to pieces of mighty Russia, and it has come about at a moment when my heart is too sore to rejoice. For me all possibility of rejoicing is smothered by the misery of this abominable peace, and by the anxiety with which I am watching the politics of our new Government.

At eleven there was a solemn Te Deum and afterwards a reception at the Metropolitan's palace where all the Bessarabians were presented to us, after which we gave them a lunch in the King's house. Nando spoke very well, and much loyalty was shown us by our new subjects. They are mostly quite simple men and behave simply; for instance, they kept getting up from their places to ask us to sign our names on their menus for them, and after lunch, when there was a demonstration beneath our window, one of them not only asked to be allowed to make a speech from the balcony upon which we were standing, but finally insisted on carrying off our sons and daughters to dance a *hora* with the crowd in the street below! Nando actually allowed it and my two daughters suddenly found themselves the centre of violent acclamations, dancing this national dance in the celebrated Strada Lapusnianu with these enthusiastic but quite unknown Bessarabians. What is the world coming to?

I hurried back to receive Captain Pantazi, one of our Roumanians who had been rescued by Colonel Boyle. He

was full of intense admiration for this brave man who risked his life so as to save a few dozen Roumanians because their Queen had asked him to look after them. The promise he had made me was sacred to him and it seemed nothing to him to risk his own life in keeping it. This man I set apart as someone quite unique and far above the average. But as we are becoming slaves, shall we be able to keep him with us?

Finally I received Stere—a difficult man to receive, an absolute Socialist, who was anything but loyal towards us, but who has many excuses, as his one ideal had always been the reunion of Bessarabia and Roumania. When he saw we were going with the Russians, of course all his hopes were shattered. He is a Roumanian Bessarabian, and having been banished for many years to Siberia, he hated Tsarism. Now his dearest dream has suddenly come about in the most unexpected manner, so of course now he has nothing more against us. It was not our personalities he fought against, but the hindrance he considered we were to the realization of his ideals.

A strange man; powerful, enthusiastic, rather brutal and at the same time a dreamer full of Russian mysticism. We were not particularly comfortable together, nor did he quite dare look me in the eye. I myself said very little but let him talk. I asked many questions, but we both had an attitude of watchfulness, neither of us being very certain on what ground and perhaps also on whose toes we were treading. It had been considered wise that I should receive him, as he is looked upon as one of the men of the future.

The news from the Western Front continues to be advantageous for the enemy. The English are suffering fearfully.

Jassy, Saturday, March 31st/April 13th, 1918.

At twelve I received Marghiloman, who had asked for an audience so as to explain to me his attitude.

According to Marghiloman there is not the slightest doubt but that the Germans will be victorious, and because of this he tries to treat them as friends instead of enemies. I listened to him patiently, but I begged him also to understand my point of view. Although we have had to give up, I refuse to consider that we are beaten, and am just as convinced as I

ever was that we have chosen the right side. I am one of those who stand or fall for a cause. When the hour of trial comes I do not deny those who were the friends of yesterday, and I still salute their colours. I am cruelly staunch : it causes me much suffering, but I am as I am. I had not the slightest feeling of bitterness against my enemies when they were my honourable and much stronger adversaries, but now that they are forcing a horrible and suffocating peace on us, I feel immensely and irreconcilably hostile. The harder the conditions they impose upon us, the more desperately do I cling to the Allies.

He defended his point of view in every possible way, was eloquent, pleasant and amiable as he always is, but to my mind he sees the enemy through rose-coloured spectacles, with an optimism which is difficult to bear. We parted, however, on friendly terms ; and he begged me to send for him whenever I was particularly upset about anything so that he should have a chance to explain matters. My answer was that although I am an open, a too open opponent, I never refused to treat with the other side.

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Chapter XXVII

DAYS OF DESPAIR

Jassy, Sunday, April 1st/14th, 1918.

TO-DAY I read an extract from an article in the newspaper *La Victoire*, which was balm upon my wounds, for in it I found these words :

La Roumanie n'a pas été battue par les allemands, elle leur a été livrée pieds et poigns liés par la revolution Russe.

Received Jean Duca, always a pleasant companion, but he looks very thin, and we had a rather painful conversation, as he has not my stamina, and to-day I am "intraitable" for all those who do not feel as strongly as I do. Jean Duca is too emotional to be in all circumstances entirely staunch.

The month of April, 1918, was a very dark one for me. I could not get accustomed to the new state of affairs. I mistrusted my actual Government, and as can be seen by the foregoing extract from my diary, was fundamentally out of sympathy with their point of view.

But a cruel thing was happening to me : I was learning to hate ! And this new experience was horrible. Hate was absolutely alien to my nature, so it was as a poison to my blood, making of me a sick woman.

I had never hated my enemy whilst I fought him in open warfare. Fate, not my free will, had made of us opponents. On the battle-field I would not have refused to shake hands with him ; we had no personal quarrel, and before God we were all human beings, every man fighting for his own country. But now, when each day I had to hear of the new peace conditions imposed upon us, I hated him, hated him with an intensity difficult to understand in cold blood, and this hatred had made of me a stranger unto myself so that I could hardly bear my own company.

It is painful to read my diary of this time, it is so saturated with excessive resentment that it does not bear copying out, so I shall only quote a page here and there, although everything is written down in detail from day to day. But it is a weary tale of depression and indignation which would not make good reading, especially as my language is exceedingly violent, so violent that in one place I say: "I wish I could invent new words never yet used to express my loathing for those who are imposing upon us an abominable, mutilating, soul-stifling peace," and this is mild in comparison with other outbursts!

Those who had what I called "a humiliating work" to do could not feel particularly friendly towards me, and I regarded them with distrust. I was perhaps harsh and sometimes unfair, but I was true to myself and the ideal I had before me. I was, in fact, the centre of resistance, an unpleasant personage for those who considered I was mistaken, but a comfort to the faithful who had not set aside their ideal.

I was becoming very suspicious, and this too was fundamentally foreign to my nature; I was never sure to-day in what spirit people approached me, if they were perhaps wolves in sheep's clothing, so I was continually on my guard, aggressively on the defensive, and this darkened my spirit.

In times of defeat, negotiation and bartering, all that is turbid has a way of coming to the top. Not every man is a hero, compromise is a common instinct, and there is more than one way of bearing adversity. Some delight to fish in troubled waters which mirror no clear picture; those bending over those waters would not have been particularly elated had they been able to see their own chameleon-like faces.

In general the moment anything goes wrong, humanity searches for a scapegoat. To-day for many I was this scapegoat.

Those eager to propitiate the enemy imagined it was in the general interest to render me harmless, and to do this, I had to be denied. Those who believed in Germany's final victory looked upon me as a danger for their plans, a stumbling-block in their way, and this was natural, because there was no treating with me, I was immovable, adamant.

But sadder than this was that even some of those with whom we had started out had become faint-hearted, their vision blurred, and they began deliberating as to how they could change colour without giving themselves away too much; and these, of whom thank goodness there were not many, I resented infinitely more than those who were openly Germanophiles. For me it could only be everything or nothing; with my character, compromise in this case was out of the question.

It was now possible with special German permission to pass over into the occupied part of the country and deputies came from there and some, anxious about their homes and houses, had the courage to cross the cruel frontier, which, like a scar, cut the country in two, and each time they returned to Jassy with sad and depressing news.

I was particularly incensed by the way our demobilized soldiers and officers were treated by the enemy, and was intensely on my guard against those who came from Bucarest: and this not without good reason, as all sorts of machinations were afoot.

Pressure was being brought to bear on the enemy's side to try and get us to send away from our household those who stood most staunchly with us: Prince Stirbey and General Ballif were on their black list. I watched with anxiety our Government's attitude, always fearing to be suddenly hit from behind. Everything was possible to-day, and I felt like a caged animal continually on the defensive and never knowing when or whence a new attack might come.

Colonel Boyle, the brave and adventurous Canadian who had come so unexpectedly into my life, was at this period a great help to me. He was a free lance, recognized no authority and obeyed no orders except those dictated to him by his own conscience. He was a refreshing personality and his quiet, almost insolent, strength seemed to me as a rock amidst tumultuous seas, stolid, immutable, not to be shaken.

He was an elderly man of heavy build, with strong, rugged features, almost ugly in fact, but his eyes, which were deep blue and keen, sometimes even fierce, could on occasion become gentle, almost tender, and his smile was kindly and reassuring. Though their grip was of steel, his hands were

unexpectedly refined. Dogged strength emanated from the man ; a stubborn tenacity. Here, indeed, was *ein Mann, ein Wert*.

At the hour of darkness when our Allies had to leave us, abandoning us to the enemy, he had, as I have narrated, clasped my hand promising that neither man nor God would make him forsake me as long as I and my country needed him, and to this promise he stuck with a single-mindedness, characteristic of his unyielding nature.

His life had been a series of adventures. The word of the Bible : "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," seemed specially written for Joe Boyle. He was indifferent to where Fate led him, but no matter where he was, whatever job he undertook, be it gold-digging in the Klondyke, cowing the Bolsheviks, or helping a distressed queen, he did it with all his might.

As far as he was personally concerned, money meant nothing to him ; he had no needs, but he enjoyed making a fortune, because fortunes spelled achievement, and could be spent in some undertaking, never matter which or in what corner of the world, as long as the work was arduous and obliged him to exert every ounce of his strength.

It was in this spirit that he had saved our Roumanian deputies from the hands of the Bolsheviks. They had during the evacuation scare been carted off to Odessa, and after the revolution suddenly found themselves prisoners, and being "bourgeois," were in continual danger of death. Finally a day had come when, for some sinister reason of their own, their jailers had driven them all aboard a ship, no explanation was given nor were they told whither they were to be taken.

Boyle happened to be in Odessa, and having in the largest sense of the word promised me to "look after any Roumanians," hearing of their predicament, he had rushed down to the harbour to find that the ship was just leaving its moorings. Unarmed as he was and companionless, he had sprung on board, and for a fortnight, although he could not speak a word of Russian, had kept the Bolsheviks at bay whilst they moved the ship from harbour to harbour : a fantastic and incredible voyage, comparable only to adventurous tales from out of the past. Finally, single-handed, with almost hypnotic

force of will, this courageous Canadian obliged the lawless revolutionaries to run the ship with its frightened cargo of prisoners into a Roumanian port.

It was a tremendous feat, an astonishing act of bravery and ruthless will-power—a single unarmed man, with no words at his disposal, keeping at bay a horde of angry cut-throats! A tale so strange and adventurous that it hardly sounds credible! But this was Joe Boyle all over, and it is no wonder that this remarkable personality should have fired my imagination, more especially at a time when we were crushed by adversity, and many had lost hope and with it all power of reaction.

Being myself entirely unresigned and exceedingly rebellious, it was natural that an irresistible sympathy should spring up between us; we understood each other from the first moment we clasped hands, as though we had never been strangers. His advice was strong, brave, stimulating, sometimes a little ruthless, but always invigorating. He admired me for my strength of resistance, and had faith in my tenacity, and this belief he had in me, kept me strong; I can honestly say that during that dark period of my life, Joe Boyle often kept me from despairing.

When Easter came I obtained permission from the King to leave for what I continue to call the "ex-front." Nothing would induce me to go to church with the actual Government; no prayers would have been possible for me in their presence.

My husband was at first very displeased with me and there were heated arguments, but he finally realized that I was in no mood to be trifled with. I could, if necessary, hold my tongue, but I could not be bent to the will of those to-day at the helm, so it was better that we should meet as seldom as possible.

I made no secret of my feelings, and the King in the end conceded that I should be more useful amongst the soldiers and peasants than in Jassy, where I was in open opposition with all and everything that was going on. So finally I was allowed to leave with my three daughters for Onești and Cotofănești where my little wooden house had been rebuilt.

During all the following months this primitive wooden

abode became my dearest refuge and, like Joe Boyle, a real source of health and recuperation.

Cotofănești, Friday, April 20th/May 3rd, 1918.

Although I slept in the train I spent the whole day at my empty little house, which has been rebuilt after the fire, but which is quite bare of furniture for the present, except for the big table in the dining-living-room and a few chairs.

I want to put it in order so that I can come here occasionally when I need a rest from the horrible atmosphere of Jassy.

I brought also Madame Kopkov with me to fit up some curtains for the different rooms. I had some plain white counterpanes dyed bright orange, and they look awfully nice with the wooden walls. I am going to dye the walls of my own private room dark brown, which will make it very restful. The architect came, and I explained to him about the few simple pieces of furniture I shall need, especially one or two big, solid tables, also some chairs and brackets.

Although the house is innocent of any furniture, I remained there all day enjoying the early spring beauty, the budding leaves and that delicious odour of things growing out of the ground.

There was a lot to do about the house, which kept us pleasantly busy. I had Elisabetta, Ileana and Nini with me, and we ate a *maigre* Good Friday lunch, according to Roumanian Church rules.

Mignon, who had a very bad cold, poor thing, had to be left in the train.

I wrote a little, seated upon a very hard chair, but I greatly enjoyed the calm, the silence, the fresh sweetness of spring.

At seven I went back to our train, which was moved to Onești, where after an exceedingly frugal supper, we took part in the very long Good Friday service in the village church, which was brimful of soldiers and peasants.

The procession round the church was charmingly picturesque, those hundreds of peasants and soldiers following us with small lights in their hands, and beyond the vast military cemetery with an army of white crosses beneath the blooming fruit trees, and on nearly every grave a little light.

The ceremony over, I began wandering about amidst these many graves, putting little lights upon those that had none, as many as I could, all those walking behind me offering me their tapers to use in this way. I seemed to be advancing through Hades.

Overhead the stars vied with the lights on the graves. It was a wonderful picture, all those white crosses and the tiny lights beneath the trees in full blossom.

When at last I got back to my bed, it was long before I could sleep, as I kept thinking of all those brave young fellows lying so peacefully beneath the ground, so blissfully unaware of our poor country's torture.

Cotofănești, Saturday, April 21st/May 4th, 1918.

We spent this day too in the little wooden home. The nightingales were singing all round, and it was divinely peaceful. I mean to make a treasure of this little house, with nothing but rustic things in it; I shall only bring the beds from Jassy, because they, of course, must be good.

We had both lunch and tea up here and finally even a hot bath, which was prepared for me in a queer sort of tub, and much refreshed I returned to our train.

The great difficulty was to keep awake for the midnight service. I was afraid if I let myself go to sleep I should not have the energy to do my duty.

Although I had a little nap I managed to pull myself together, and appeared at the church on the stroke of midnight, and took part in the "Invieri" surrounded by masses of soldiers and peasants. I did not have the courage to stand through the whole service, which is endless, especially in a village, so I returned to the train for a rest, and at two o'clock I went back again accompanied only by Ballif, as Elisabetta was too tired, to put in an appearance at the military Easter supper. This was very nice, and beautifully arranged beneath God's stars, not far from the church. Two sets of tables had been spread, a large square for the officers and, beyond this, a wider square for all the soldiers who had come from the different regiments of the Second Army.

I made the round of all the soldiers and broke eggs with them, according to Roumanian custom. They were en-

chanted and I looked into many bright eyes and saw the flashing of many white teeth. I then sat down at the officers' table and pretended to eat whilst there was music, reciting and singing and many toasts were drunk and loyal speeches made. Amongst my soldiers I am at peace.

I did not get to bed till four.

Easter Sunday was spent entirely amongst the peasants, going from village to village. I loved moving amongst these simple, quiet people. Their patience was so extraordinary and my greatest desire was to help them as much as possible.

Ever since war had come upon us I had had the habit of taking provisions with me wherever I went. The misery being very great, it seemed essential never to appear anywhere with empty hands. Good words and kind intentions were not enough; on all occasions help had immediately to be forthcoming.

I had a quite young footman, who always followed me. Being mobilized he wore uniform. I had trained him to my altruistic habits, so everything was ready at any hour or any place; at hand whenever there was need.

We had formed a well-organized little *équipe*: Colonel Ballif, who had just been promoted General, Major Georgescu his *aide*, Costescu belonging to the police service, Ioan Macedon, my servant, and myself.

All were perfectly drilled and I had trained them to be almost as indefatigable as myself, and for two long arduous years these four men were eternally at my beck and call, patiently faithful.

I hated going back to Jassy, but I was never allowed to remain away long; I was the watchdog, the one who kept enemies at bay, so I had to be near the King.

Jassy, Saturday, May 26th/June 8th, 1918.

A restlessly busy and upsetting day, in terrible contrast to the rest I had found in my little wooden house. Of course I was met with all the different news I most dislike hearing. At eleven we had a big Requiem for our soldiers fallen in battle, a service which had been put off continually by our Government, which also protested against our Allies being

invited. They are afraid of making the Germans angry; this situation is absolutely intolerable; how shall we be able to live through it without revolt?

The only foreign officer in church was Colonel Boyle, whom I had invited before I knew that the Allies had been excluded. Boyle was quite indifferent as to orders: I had invited him, that was quite enough for him. What others thought about his being there was a matter of glorious indifference to him.

As luck would have it, my very "unloved" Government was not able to put in an appearance because of a railway strike. At this I rejoiced.

The ceremony was beautiful; the church was filled with the regimental flags, the singing was fine, the general emotion great.

I stood before my high throne-chair dressed in my white Red Cross uniform, a candle in my hand, and looked down upon the congregation, and felt so entirely the mother of this suffering, torn and often mistaken, yet dearly loved people, that when the fine chorus swelled through the great church a tremendous emotion took possession of me. All that was and all that might have been passed before my mind; our crushed hopes, our shattered dream, the cruel reality, the many mistakes; and above all, as in a vision, I seemed to see all the faces of the dead, who had died for a cause that they, like me, had believed in. I also saw the face of little Mircea, who had been torn from me at the beginning of the great tragedy.

Tears welled up in my eyes and I wept; wept only as a broken-hearted mother can weep, the mother of a dead child, of dead hopes, the mother of a suffering people she has learned to love and who have learned to love her.

Oh, it was an hour of profoundly tragic emotion, and yet looking down upon those strong, honest-faced, sad-eyed, patient men, who were holding the flags, I said to myself:

"This race *will* live, *must* live; I shall work for it heart and soul, even if I go to pieces over the effort, as verily it seems to be a work beyond the strength of one woman." I thought I was destined to be a happy, brilliant, successful queen; all within me seemed to promise this, and I seemed

made for that part. But perhaps, on the contrary, my lot is to be a tragic, vanquished queen, ever so much more tragic than Carmen Sylva ever was with all her talk of a martyr's crown. I had no vocation for a martyr's part, and yet it looks as though God had singled out Nando and myself to bear a cross which at times seems almost too heavy.

We lunched at a late hour and when finally I returned to my room, I found there a whole tub of flowers, glorious roses, peonies, irises, and bluebells; I stood dumbfounded before them. Never since my exile had I seen such flowers. Wherever did they come from? And suddenly I noticed a card and on it was written "Gruss aus Cotroceni"!—Cotroceni. . . .

Steinbach had arrived, and these were flowers from my own garden, my own flowers, from over there. Over there where Mircea lies all alone awaiting us.

This quite broke me down and turning to Hélène Perticari who was beside me I fell into her arms and we both wept as though we should never more cease weeping.

But I could not permit myself the luxury of grief: audiences were waiting for me and I had to get through several of these before I could find time to see Steinbach.

Steinbach, who has been guardian of our invaded home, guardian of Mircea's grave. Oh, indeed it was enough emotion for one day, more than enough!

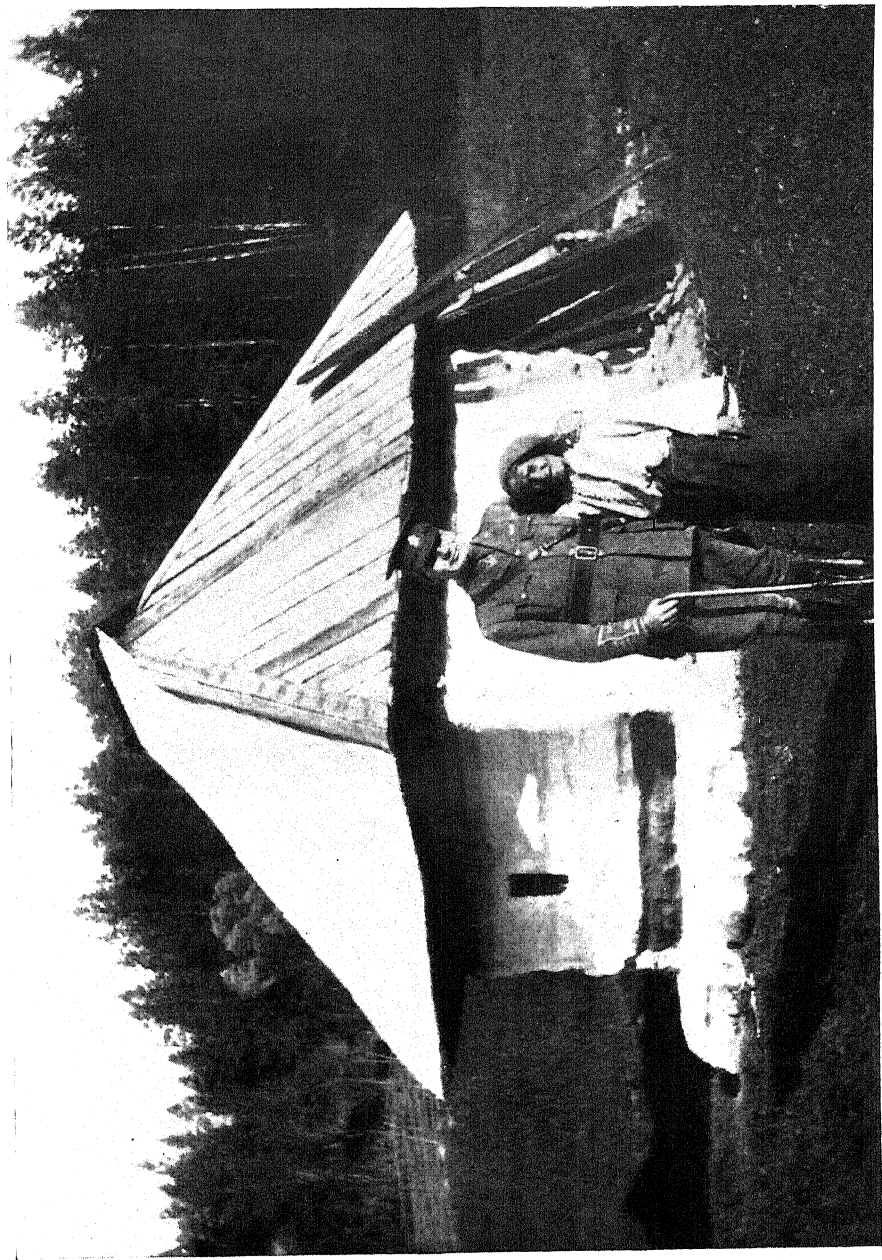
To listen to all that Steinbach had to relate was excruciating pain. Horrible! Each detail is horrible, horrible. . . . But he, too, says that Mackensen is decent, a gentleman who tries to help the Roumanians and to listen as fairly as possible to the complaints of the oppressed. He has a Scotch name, and Scotch blood in his veins, and this is perhaps the explanation.

Steinbach implores me not to be too violent, not to show too strongly my feelings of resentment.

Jassy, Thursday, May 30th/June 12th, 1918.

The weather has suddenly become intolerably hot, unbreathable, all sign of rain has disappeared from the skies: we are panting.

This has been a week of audiences. I did not even try



COL. BOYLE WITH A SPECIAL PROTÉGÉE WHOSE ROOF WE REPAIRED.
(Observe size of the house!)

to struggle against them, I simply let them swamp me. But to-day only one audience counted; it stood out huge, dark and sinister: Oberst von Brandenstein, the German officer who has come to Jassy for the demobilization of our troops.

It was considered necessary that I should receive him, but everybody was anxious as to what my reception of him would be. Certainly it was a horrible moment; all my blood boiled within me at this first contact with the enemy, and in this way! How much rather would I have met him face to face in battle!

I steeled myself to be quite calm. The man was shy and uncomfortable and my heart was beating fast. However, I began by politely asking him if he was comfortably lodged. I was quite self-possessed, not in the least shy, but all the same there were pauses in our conversation because too much lay between us, too many dead on both sides, but on their side there was also the horrible peace they are forcing on us. We could perhaps have been able to pass over the dead, but not over the peace conditions, and he knew this.

We talked of the War, of the powers of hatred now let loose over the world, of the want of food felt everywhere, of the want of rain here that may mean famine to many, all this only from a general point of view, but all the while feeling the immense, unspoken horror which lay behind each one of our words.

There was only one more personal thing that I said when I told him that I had heard that Mackensen had tried his best to be kind to the Roumanians and that I, as their Queen, would never forget anybody who tried to help a Roumanian. I also talked about the typhus, about how our soldiers had died of it last year in the small villages, of how I had been with them everywhere and how I had seen them die; but that I wasn't afraid of infection. I talked also of the snow, of the want of wood and soap, and yet all the time behind the words I said, boiled my horrible indignation about the peace conditions.

Brandenstein was neither fat nor thin, neither big nor small; he was rather ugly and very dark, had watery eyes

and was very uncomfortable, more uncomfortable than I was, although it was I who was at his mercy. We behaved as so-called civilized, well brought up people should behave, but war has torn the mask off civilization, and we both knew it, both felt it!

It was a hideous interview and left me trembling. *Que Dieu ait pitié des pauvres cœurs humains!*

Towards evening I drove with Nicky in his motor to Stâncă; the temperature was horrible, Stâncă was dry and thirsty and the air so heavy that I could hardly drag myself about. I longed to lie down and weep: lie down and die. Everything was thirsty, wanted to live, but was dying of thirst, drying up, fading, shrivelling because the sky won't give it drink!

The world is dying of hate. . . .

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Chapter XXVIII

PEACEFUL INTERLUDE

THE King at last realized that it was better for me not to be too much in Jassy : I had more or less reached the end of my tether, and besides, I could be of no more help for the moment. It was no good trying to break my will, nor to hope to make me change my point of view, and I think it was quite a relief to the "pacifists" when I begged to be allowed to go from time to time to my little wooden house.

So there were blessed days when I was allowed to shake off the dust of town from my heels, taking with me a friend, or one or the other of my children to become enchanted possessors of the house on the hill.

All through my youth and later years I had yearned to spend a spring in the country, but this joy had always been denied me ; duty and Uncle's heavy restrictions had barred every liberty, every hope. So it was a strange coincidence that it should have been war-time which at last fulfilled my greatest desire : to enjoy spring in the wilds, far from court life and scheduled obligations.

The enchantment of my freedom in the little Cotofănești house is hardly to be described in words ; it was ecstasy. I adored every tree, every plant, the young foliage, the wild roses : I revelled in the sunrises and sunsets, in the unrestricted simplicity, the delicious isolation ; I had achieved my dearest ideal, I was enjoying a free life in the country, I was possessor of a wee house which had several doors opening right out on the woods !

With my ceaseless craving for beauty, I had in no time made a treasure out of my wooden abode. My own room especially became all my heart could desire. Its walls, ceiling and floor had been stained dark brown. On the panel-

ling behind my bed, which was but a broad couch heaped up with cushions in every shade of orange, I had stretched an old piece of Russian church brocade, mellow-tinted in different tones of gold, and upon this throned a time-darkened icon in a silver setting.

A dusky Turkish rug lay over the floor and instead of flower-vases I used empty shell-cases of every calibre, heavy and rusty brown. Here and there a piece of bright green peasant pottery, a brass dish such as the gipsies use in our country, and with the deep-toned orange curtains the colour scheme was a rest for my eyes so long wearied by ghastly sights.

This room opened out upon a wooden veranda and in its rustic simplicity was indeed a chamber of peace and repose.

Also our dining-living-room was very attractive. It was a goodly size and had in the centre a large, heavy, octagonal table. The walls were of natural pitch-pine, but feeling the need of a violent splash of colour, I had dyed an old bath-towel deep dark orange, and this I had spread over the centre of the table, and upon it stood a shallow brass bowl always full of flowers or bright green foliage. When the sun shone into the room, this bowl would sparkle like gold.

There were no pictures or prints on my plain walls, except for a single icon representing a weird old saint with an enormously broad beard. I called this holy gentleman "The Saint of the Four Winds," declaring that this was the house where the four winds met. My venerable saint wore a jewel-studded halo round his head and was really an impressive personage: he, too, was painted on an old-gold background, the colour of beech trees in autumn. Undeniably my wooden abode was an adorable retreat and everyone who saw it loved it as I did.

Many came to visit me in my solitude, especially those who, like me, were sick of what was going on in our official world. My doors were hospitably open to every visitor, and my table stretched according to the number of my guests. The generals of the different armies were the most assiduous, Vaitoianu, Grigorescu, Margineanu and my jovial friend Moşoiu.



“THE SAINT OF THE FOUR WINDS.”

Colonel Boyle too came to us, and once I took him for a long drive through the spring woods and showed him our former military positions and also the dear little monastery of Moșinoaia where several of the bravest officers of the Second Chasseur Battalion had found temporary graves.

I loved this profoundly poetical sanctuary hidden away amongst the secular beech trees in the very heart of the forest, with its ancient wooden church and solitary monk who was as old as my Saint of the Four Winds, though shabbier, less complacent-looking, and with no halo round his humble old face.

On this particular day I found an apple tree in late bloom growing quite near the church, pink against grey. I broke some of its branches and laid them on our soldiers' graves.

Boyle had much to tell, and he also elaborated for me several plans as to how I could help the poor population; he did everything he could to ease the weight oppressing my heart. He was a wonderful friend, strong with brave, healthy principles. He continually kept my ideal before me. Putting me on my honour, he made all wailing seem paltry, almost cowardly in fact. Like Ballif, Boyle had something relentless about him, he was always in deadly earnest, but his heart was in the right place. A great spinner of yarns, he had so many tales to tell about his adventurous life, but we never had leisure enough to hear them all. In times of depression he was an extraordinarily refreshing and invigorating companion, and an unexpected touch of early Victorian Puritanism added much to his quaintness. He neither drank nor smoked. My Ileana adored him, and he filled her young soul with strong and healthy maxims which later she carried with her out into life.

During my sojourn at Cotăfănești I also discovered another monastery called Bogdana. I have a special love for these ancient sanctuaries, mostly to be found hidden away in deep valleys far from high roads of this noisy world.

Bogdana was a less humble monastery than Moșinoaia; it possessed a solid stone church surrounded by high walls and was inhabited by at least a dozen monks.

I discovered this place of beauty on a marvellous spring

day when the young green was sprouting and the apple trees and cowslips were in full bloom; that enchanting season when the world seems new, when the nightingales sing and all things are tender, succulent, rapturous, like a song of love.

I remember climbing a small hill behind the monastery where a large group of fir trees stood, night-black against the sunshine of budding beeches, and seating myself on a fallen tree, fascinated I gazed down upon its high encircling walls, inner court and humble churchyard.

Cowslips in yellow profusion grew around my feet; beyond the wooded hills were clouds of hazy green. From afar the sound of cow-bells, the liquid note of a blackbird, and coming slowly towards me over a meadow studded with marsh-marigolds, staff in hand, a quite young monk followed by a flock of sheep. Peace, beauty, stillness . . . my very soul seemed to drink them in.

The charm about Cotofănești was that I lived in close contact with the peasants, and as there was much want and misery I, of course, quickly became the centre of help. My house had open doors for all those in need, but it was not easy to cope with their many wants, and on certain days, when they came in too great numbers, I was often at my wits' end. Ballif, who only half approved of my altruism, would then shrug his shoulders and the words "I told you so" were written largely all over his protesting person.

He, however, procured for me a huge cauldron, and in this a thick nourishing soup was daily prepared, around which the most destitute and hungry would gather, bringing their own earthenware bowls and wooden spoons. They accepted this unexpected boon with the calm lack of astonishment characteristic of the Roumanian peasant.

There was a very miserable village with the name of Boștea Galea, which I had specially taken under my care, and here in this village Ileana and I had many friends. Far from the high road, Boștea Galea could only be reached on foot, on horseback, or in an ox-cart. We knew every house, the name of every inhabitant, how they were related to each other and also all about their family feuds. One,

Baba Elisaveta, the most ancient of the community, had always to receive our first visit: this was village etiquette. Her cottage was minute and very poor, but perfectly clean and tidy. Of course her complaints knew no end: her roof needed repairing, her hens were sick, her cow gave no milk. Outside her crooked little door the rest of the village inhabitants would gather ready to carry us off to their own homes, the moment we re-crossed the old dame's threshold. By the villagers she was quaintly designated "Stefan's Elisaveta," Stefan being her very old husband, who otherwise played little part except that of being old Elisaveta's possessor. He seldom put in an appearance, and was seemingly more at home amongst the sick hens and milkless cow than within the neat poverty of his house.

The most prosperous cottage in the village was ruled over by Mother Anica, who had a consumptive daughter Maria, and endless other children, amongst them Stance and Dumétru, who were our constant companions, spending the greater part of their day following us about or patiently seated on our door-step awaiting our next outing.

Mother Anica was more full of lamentations than any other woman in the village. Her care-worn face showed traces of former beauty, and whilst she bewailed her many misfortunes, she would press the end of her white head-cloth against her mouth as though to hide its sad resignation; she would shrug her shoulders and slowly wag her head, but in her eyes lay the deep patience of those who till the earth.

Foremost amongst Anica's troubles was, of course, poor sick Maria, a lovely girl, but as pale as a church taper. Quite naturally I took special charge of Maria and saw to it that she should be well fed whilst I was in the vicinity, also leaving plentiful provision for when I should be away, but I was, alas, almost certain that *saraca Maria* was not to be long for this earth.

Occasionally I would hire a cart drawn by oxen, and filling this with food and clothing, picking our way with difficulty up and down precipitous inclines, I would descend upon the village laden with all those precious and unbuyable necessities the peasants had not seen for months.

Our most faithful followers were four exceedingly ragged little *ciobani* (shepherds) who had, as a matter of course, dedicated themselves to our service, carrying and fetching for us, and going with us wherever we roamed. Occasionally, however, they would remember their other duties and would then be found, switch in hand, guarding a stray cow or a few wandering sheep.

Colonel Boyle had quaintly declared that every Roumanian boy between the age of four and thirteen would be sent to guard something, from a sparrow to a bull; switch in hand he would sit all day doing nothing, which was detrimental to his education, whilst his sisters at an early age were worked to death helping their mothers in their arduous household duties, washing, cooking, cleaning the house, feeding the pigs and hens, looking after the babies; serious-faced, worn-out little creatures, carrying weights beyond their strength, whilst their brothers lolled about in comfortable sloth.

Three of our four *ciobani* friends happened to be called "Ioan"; there was the tall Ioan and black Ioan, and Ioan, Ileana's favourite, whom she had singled out as her particular chum. The fourth was Dumétru, *saraca Maria's* and Stanca's brother. Dumétru, for some unexplained reason, seemed to have a certain standing in the village and was the one who was best up in all the village news. He had dark, saucy eyes, gloriously white teeth and, like every *cioban*, always carried a switch or staff in his hand.

Dumétru's family was the possessor of a wonderful milk-white cow. This creature of dreams was suddenly revealed to us one day whilst we were resting under the shade of a wide-branched lime tree. Our long and exhausting rambles generally ended beneath this rarely beautiful tree, and here I would spread a little feast, taken with me for my young companions, whilst Ileana solemnly catechized the four shepherds upon their religious beliefs. Ileana was a convinced Orthodox and very strict about what was due to the Church: there was no laxity in Ileana's conception of duty. There was much talk about the saints and their different canonized virtues, St. Michael, St. John, St. Demetrius or the venerable Nicholas. Ileana knew all about them and was eager

to impart her knowledge. But *my* talk was about the War, about our Allies and about the reverence owed to those fallen for their country. I also spoke about the distant isle upon which I had been born.

And as we sat there earnestly talking, suddenly a snow-white cow stood before us. The sun shone on her milky coat, so that she appeared to be full of light. She had about her something of the sacred cows of India, and was quite different from the cows habitual to Roumania. The sight was so unexpected that it was almost like a vision. But Dumétru explained that it was their cow, and was evidently flattered by our exclamations of admiration. The white cow made, in fact, quite a hero of bare-footed Dumétru, and he smilingly accepted this dignity.

My four shepherds were also very keen to help me in caring for the soldiers' churchyard perched high up above the Trotuş. We often went there together and I taught them to pull up the invading weeds and how to keep the graves tidy and neat. I had sown no end of seeds in this enclosure, but the ground being very dry and stony, few of them had come up, only some sunflowers and here and there a stray anemone grown from English seeds. We nursed these plants with breathless interest and watered them with water brought from afar, and also often from here we would watch the sun set over the river, flooding earth and water with fiery, molten gold.

On Sunday the workaday rags were discarded and every peasant donned his finest costume, his whitest shirt, his gayest belt. The women wore pleated red skirts and queer, short velvet jackets, padded and embroidered. In solemn procession they would climb up to my house with small bouquets of wild strawberries, or flowers tied up with strips of coloured cloth. If I was not immediately to be found, they would congregate around my threshold awaiting my coming.

It was an idyllic life which I deeply enjoyed, and all those who followed me shared in my love for the place.

Cella was with me once for a few days, Cella being a very dear friend with a marvellous musical talent, the daughter of our writer, poet and patriot, Barbu Delavrancea. I had

known her ever since she was a small child, when she used to play the piano in Carmen Sylva's rooms. She was small, with a mass of naturally wavy brown hair: enthusiastic, spontaneous, ardent and also full of fun; we were perfect companions and enjoyed each other's company in a very special way. Cella liked me to read to her, but declared that I was hopeless whilst the wild roses were in bloom, as I never could be kept in the house but eternally roamed about amongst these flowers, irresistible to me ever since childhood. Elisabetta was also devoted to Cella and we made a happy trio.

But my chief companion was Ileana; she better than anyone shared my love for the peasants and for the little wooden house.

She came with me, accompanied only by a nursery maid, old Nini having been left in Jassy. This was a marvellous occasion for enjoying a liberty seldom to be had. Both of us were as prisoners who had escaped from the enforced round, and every hour we spent at Cotăfănești was deep joy.

It was only the very violent thunderstorms which occasionally upset Ileana's blissful content. Up on this exposed height the noise and clatter during a thunderstorm was terrific, a wonderful but also an awe-inspiring sight. One night I remember standing on our wooden veranda, whilst the whole world seemed to be torn by blinding sheets of light accompanied by ear-splitting explosions. But as the spring and early summer had been disastrously dry, the formidable deluge which followed this particular storm was a veritable benediction.

Ileana had been given a wee baby hare, the most adorable creature imaginable; its eyes were huge and shiny like mountain waters, its fur the colour of partridge's feathers and its long whiskers quivered in time with its anxious little nose. We both tenderly loved this baby thing which we christened Pitera, and it was our companion day and night; it slept in Ileana's room.

One morning Ileana rushed into my room overcome with grief; Pitera had been found dead between wall and cupboard, nor did we ever rightly discover what caused our

favourite's death, but we mourned for it deeply; it had been such a soft, tender little thing.

Every smallest incident of our days at Cotofănești is noted down in my diary, but I only copy out the last day. We had a pleasant young companion with us, Lili Catargi, the eldest daughter of our Maréchal de la Cour, an intelligent girl, slim, agile, always on the move, ready for any adventure; she simply revelled in this free, untrammelled life and was very proud of being my chosen companion.

Cotofănești, Wednesday, June 20th/July 3rd, 1918.

Our last day here. The sadness of it pervades the house, which with its many flowers is looking particularly sweet. I have many lilies and my own little brown room, with its old stuffs and orange curtains, is perfection. We all love the little house with passionate gratitude, we feel we would like to tell its very walls how much we love it and how grateful we are to it for being so sweet, snug and home-like and for having such a lovely view. Each morning on awakening, we have that feeling and each time we come back to it after a walk or drive, also in the night when the moon is shining, or all the stars are out when we go to bed. We are grateful for each sunset, for each light which plays upon the river beneath. Certainly the many peasants have become really an invasion difficult to cope with, but there are many friends amongst them and their confidence in me is both pathetic and touching.

Ileana lives in a world of self-created ecstacy. She has found a little wooded corner beneath our house, which she calls her "secret garden." Its existence is surrounded by almost holy mystery; she talks of it with bated breath and one of the four Ioans, her favourite, has been let into the secret and works with her endlessly putting the precious little garden in order. It is a joy to contemplate her enchantment and to note the extraordinary glamour with which she surrounds that simple little piece of ground. At all hours of the day she goes down to it and then she reappears with glowing cheeks and shining eyes, bright with the delight of this blissfully free life.

All the morning I read and wrote, but after tea we went

for a last walk, having driven up to the top of the hill and coming down on foot by other roads through the forest, ending of course by the village, where naturally we paid farewell visits to all our humble friends. We walked steadily for three hours.

Ileana, to her greatest delight, had got hold of a shaggy peasant pony of two colours, with a pink nose and an anxious, patient eye, and on this pony she rode part of the time with a grey cloth instead of a saddle. Of course, this cloth was for ever slipping round under the patient beast's tummy; this horse really had a resigned, long-suffering air, but the slipping cloth only added to Ileana's pleasure as nearly everything does at that age under certain circumstances. We discovered a new road which was quite enchanting.

The whole place was one mass of huge, sometimes man-high, flowers which the Germans call "Lebenslichte" and which in Roumanian we call "Luminare" but of which I do not know the English name. They are extraordinarily decorative and shoot up everywhere like pale jets of light.

Our most loving farewell was to sick Maria and to Mother Anica. They had just prepared their supper in their tiny court-yard—a huge mamaliga and cold borch with white beans all placed upon a tiny, flat, circular table round which the peasants squat on wee, three-legged stools. Of course we were invited to take part in their supper. It was a real *Liebesmahl*.

Slowly and sadly we returned to the beloved house which we were to quit after supper. There was a wonderful sunset and we made a last tour of each room, taking a fond farewell.

Just before leaving for my last and longest stay at Coto-fănești, we received the news that Colonel Boyle had had a stroke whilst flying in Bessarabia. This was a terrible blow to me. This strong, self-reliant man had been as a rock on a stormy sea. There was something of a sturdy oak about him and his steady strength; now it was as though lightning had struck the oak under which I had thought to take shelter. It seemed incredibly unfair and cruel that Fate should thus lay low this only friend who



MIGNON RIDING LIKE OUR PEASANT WOMEN.

had remained with us when all the Allies had been ordered to leave Roumania. And what made it doubly hard was that it was absolutely impossible for me to go into Bessarabia just then, so that I, who had looked after so many hundreds of anonymous sufferers, was not able to hurry to the sick-bed of my friend.

The return from Cotăfănești was as usual difficult. But fortunately here also it had rained copiously and the parched land had suddenly bloomed with a thousand flowers.

Chapter XXIX

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

Jassy, Thursday, June 21st/July 4th, 1918.

IT is not easy to take up the Jassy life again, but the children are happy to have me back.

The great event for me to-day is that I actually received two letters from Mamma, a rather ancient one from Coburg and a much more recent one from Switzerland. The news she gives about herself is on the whole good, but the news she sends me about Ducky is terrible in every way. Her spirit is so broken that even the Germans begin to be looked upon as saviours, so ghastly is their situation in the land of the Bolsheviks. Poor, poor Ducky, when I think of how she felt about our mutual enemy the last time she was here! And never shall I know all the details of their suffering, their fear, their horror!

In the afternoon Didine Cantacuzène, who had come from Bucarest, came to see me, and we had endless talks. On all sides there is suffering, despair, grief and misery.

I also visited Lise Soutzo, who has been operated on for appendicitis, and is being looked after by her aunt in the Caritatea hospital.

Jassy, Saturday, June 23rd/July 6th, 1918.

Have developed a heavy cold and felt miserable all day, but I had, all the same, to see many people, amongst others General Petala and Jean Chrissoveloni to talk over my Regina Maria ambulances. Our Government is being nasty, and Jean is being unfairly treated. I was feeling physically unwell so I all but broke down over everything I heard. But I gritted my teeth and remained calm and practical in spite of my grief. It was one of those dark days, when everything seems hideous, a *Weltschmerz* day, when nothing

is bearable, when one sees only the ugly side of things, and every effort towards good appears vain. I was in the sort of mood when one would like to give up, to become non-existent, to disappear; a horrid feeling!

Jassy, Sunday, June 24th/July 7th, 1918.

To-day I received Averescu, who had for some time desired to see me. We had not met for weeks, and our last interviews had been stormy. The first moment was not without a feeling of constraint. But in spite of my outspokenness I have enough worldly tact to bridge over a difficult situation. So as to keep off too burning subjects, I began about the agrarian question, saying that I had followed up his attitude in Parliament and was glad to see that on this point we agreed.

We talked for two hours. He was eager to explain his attitude when he began treating for peace, and declared he would have obtained much better conditions had he remained in power; he was eloquent, persuasive, conciliatory, but I am still too sore, too suspicious, to recapture the old friendly and confidential footing of a few months ago. This made me very sad, as the general and I had always worked together, but there are still too many dark questions not yet explained. Some I was able to speak about, and Averescu had, of course, good reasons to give for everything, but I am not sure that they always satisfied me. Lately I have seen too much changing with the wind, too much howling with the wolves, and were I not a queen I would say too much ingratitude. But a queen must not look for gratitude; she must unceasingly give and ask for nothing in return.

Although my head was aching intolerably, I got through this difficult audience pretty well on the whole. But we talked for over two hours, and by the time the general left I was almost at the end of my tether.

I had now less to do. The welfare of the poor and suffering became my great perplexity. Because of the heavy hand the enemy held over us, our poor country was being drained of its last resources, my own provisions had dimin-

ished, and I could no more replenish them via Russia. It was a sad time, but I struggled against the overwhelming depression as best I could.

We began talking about going to Bicaz, one of the Crown Estates in the lovely mountain valley of the Bistrița. There there was a big white house on the very brink of the river, upon which the great rafts came floating by. A quiet, idyllic place, and although the house was not very large, with a certain amount of squeezing we should be able to live there, all of us together.

Town had become intolerable, and we felt the need of a longer rest in really good country air; but it was still some time before we could get off definitely.

Heavy rains had much refreshed the country all around Jassy. I took to riding again, either with Ileana or Nicky. An enormous, heavy hunter, bought from a Russian officer, had been added to our stables, and it amused me to gallop this elephantine animal which I had called Jumbo.

But of an evening I would tempt my husband out for long motor drives, exploring the region, thus discovering many a forlorn and picturesque village. The peasants were happy to see us, and wherever I went I tried to bring a little help.

The King was a great botanist and delighted in the wild flowers which now, after the rain, bloomed everywhere in rich profusion; he cared for simple pleasures and I was glad to find a way of bringing even a small joy into his harassed life.

Now I was receiving fewer people, as I had shut myself away as much as possible from our official world, but my door was still open to all those who asked to see me.

One day a Russian, a certain Count Ugarov, asked for an audience. He had just come from Russia and brought me sad news about Nicky (the Tsar) and his family, heart-breaking news about the way they are being treated in Siberia. I am afraid they are in great danger. Aunt Minnie, the Dowager Empress, who is in the Crimea, seems less badly off. Everywhere sadness and anxiety.

But my chief despair was the behaviour of our Germanophile Government; I distinctly felt that they were sell-

ing us to the enemy. Clinging to their belief that victory would be on that side, they seemed ready to make any humiliating concession. But I was as firm as ever, absolutely relentless in my opposition, and I did all in my power to make the King share my indignation. I remained unbendingly intransigent; for me there was only one way, only one opinion, and to this I held fast, indifferent to my unpopularity with those in power. The King occasionally considered me too intractable, too categorical, but I instinctively felt that my attitude of no compromise would one day be my country's strength. I felt that the day would come when my people would be grateful to me for being so unbending, perhaps even those who, to-day, considered me a pugnacious nuisance. I was there, a shadow in the background, disapproving of their politics. To-day I was an insupportable hindrance, but the time would come when truth would be on my side. The faithful, as well as those who, to-day, were not sure of their own minds, needed my strength of resistance; this was my most absolute conviction.

About this time I find in my diary this passage:

"Nando is to receive Marghiloman to-day, who is to bring him a paper to sign, in which he declares a general amnesty concerning all those who betrayed our cause. He *must* not sign this paper; I implored him to be strong and to resist Marghiloman's coercion, but he gave me no positive assurance. Tortured by the thought that he might give in, I wrote a fearfully energetic little note and sent Nicky over to the King's house to give it to him, *during* his audience with his premier. Then I sat in my room and trembled; he cannot and must not sign that amnesty; it would be a shame to him for all the rest of his life; it would be a weakness both friend and foe would condemn."

But it can easily be conceived that Marghiloman, though he remained outwardly polite, could have no great love for me as I was indeed his most implacable opponent.

But, of course, I had difficult moments with the King. I knew that I often troubled, even exasperated him; besides, he resented it when people came to consult with me and found in me a resolution they did not always find

in him, and in spite of the displeasure he often showed me, I *had* to stand firm. One day he, too, would recognize that I had to have this attitude; it kept him steady and frightened those who wanted to coerce him to do the wrong thing. It was my unshakable belief that I was right, which gave me the sad strength to be such a termagant.

There were hours, however, when Nando let me talk calmly with him, and then I tried to make him understand that we must complete each other. Our characters were different, but just this difference could be useful, if we could only find the necessary patience towards each other's peculiarities. I was too categorical, too conclusive, he too much of a doubter. There had to be moments when doubt must be set aside for action, and at those moments he must forgive me for being what he considered too excessive. Often I prayed for the tongue of angels so that I should find the right words which would not make him angry, but open his eyes to what should be. It must be very trying not to be able to make up one's mind, but it is also a tremendous responsibility to be so sure that one is right. Occasionally the temptation came to me, especially when I was unjustly scolded, to give up, but I am glad to say that these hours were rare, and on the whole my unbendable conviction that right was on my side carried me over the most dangerous reefs.

But certainly I was not a *pleasant* companion at that period; of this I was well aware.

Finally the happy day dawned when we left Jassy for Bicz. This change from town to mountain air was a great relief, and we soon found how much good it did us. The simple country life soothed our strained nerves and we delighted in the beautiful valley, the dear little villages, the old churches and convents, and soon became very fond of the peasants, who all wear picturesque costumes. Numerous small valleys branched off from the chief valley; every day there was some new place to discover, and the wild flowers were a continual enchantment.

Also we saw much less of our Government, though the ministers appeared occasionally to worry the King with

their different, sickening demands. Generally they travelled through the night, arriving for breakfast, which was a meal taken in common. I looked at these gentlemen with suspicion, and their appearance generally meant difficult hours with my husband afterwards, when my watch-dog attitude became again most necessary. But there were also blessed days of peace when we could breathe more easily. Besides, the news from the Allied fronts was good; it came to us late and in small bits, but it came all the same, in spite of German control and propaganda. I received it with almost holy joy, but refrained from outward manifestations for fear of putting out the light of hope, for fear also of fresh disappointment to which we were, alas, too accustomed.

Carol was in command of a Chasseur regiment at Targu Neamțu, a little town not far off. I had obtained this command for him, as I found it necessary that he should be given a responsible position, and some real, active, military work to do. This new dignity seemed to please him. He came occasionally to Bicaz to see us, but I did not think he was in good health; he was too thin, he coughed, and it was as though something were preying on his mind.

We went much about amongst the peasants and I soon discovered their many needs. With the aid of Prince Stirbey I had managed to buy several wagon-loads of corn-meal, that our peasants call *malai* and which is their chief food. Under the supervision of Dr. Mamulea I organized in our village a regular distribution of this precious foodstuff, now become scarce, and also instituted a dispensary where the sick and ailing could come for medicines and medical aid. Hundreds came daily and we were able to do much good.

The Bistrița valley was very poor, and ever since the active fighting had ceased the Red Cross and also the Regina Maria organization had worked in many valleys with great devotion, looking after the destitute peasants. Many of my friends headed these *équipes*, foremost amongst these being Madame Balș (sister of Prince Stirbey), Dr. and Madame Emile Costinescu, Madame Coanda and her daughters, and many others. In a small village not far from Bicaz Tarcău, a certain Madame Antonescu, the very soul of charity, had done wonderful and devoted work, but having caught some

infection she fell ill and died, thus sacrificing her life for the poor. The peasants having dearly loved her, insisted that she should be buried amongst them, and I would often go to her grave, and those for whom she cared would flock round me, telling me all about her. "She was like a mother," they declared, and whilst they talked, I would see before me her young, serious and charming face as I had known her last summer in Cotăfănești, where together we had looked after the wounded. Her memory was kept holy in the village of Tarcău.

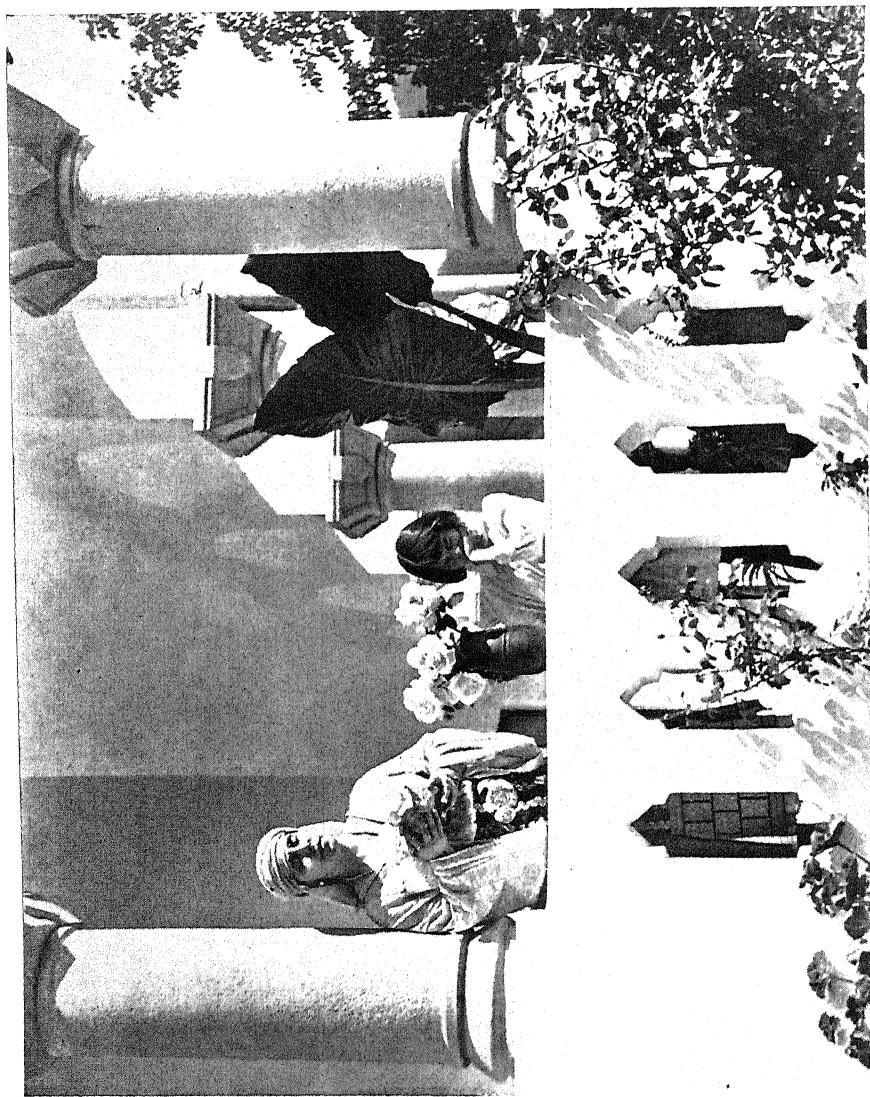
On July 22nd we were brought the news that the Tsar had been murdered. No details, but only just the news that he had been killed, nor was there any mention of his family.

I was horrified. So they had really done it! I had always been afraid it would end thus, but had hoped against hope that in some way they could have been saved. On the 31st we had a requiem for poor Nicky in our village church. I quote my diary:

"At eleven we had a very simple and very pathetic *parastas* for poor Nicky. For some reason the official world tried to prevent our having this service, but I insisted upon it, if not officially, which I considered would have been right, then at least privately with our household. They were exceedingly religious and prayers for the dead meant much to them. Poor Nicky! I shudder to think of your end, you, who knew all of power and glory; and such a death!

"And if you had died on the throne what a fuss they would have made, what pompous ceremonies there would have been in every church, in every country! But to-day because you are fallen from power, an exile, they try to ignore you; they did not even want us to have a requiem in your memory, they would pray for the dead emperor, but not for the martyr you are to-day; this is humanity.

"But here, in the rustic village church, we prayed with all our hearts for the peace of your soul. You are a poor captive no more, neither the slave of power nor of a savage horde. Surely God recognizes in you the good man you



ON THE BALCONY OF THE BICAZ HOUSE.

were. He alone will be the fair judge of the mistakes you made whilst on the throne, for all men are mistaken, and probably you had to die for sins not your own.

"As I stood in the small, unadorned church whilst the humble village priest was celebrating the prescribed rites, I deeply pondered over your life, all the past glory, the tragic end . . . I remembered how we had been children together. I saw again your gentle face. I had a vision of your riding into Moscow for your coronation, a quite young man surrounded by all the pomp and glory of the world. I saw you at Tsarskoe with your children, at Constanța the last time we met.

"Dear Nicky, I loved you sincerely. Our little requiem was celebrated without pomp, but it is not pomp you need to-day but hearts which can understand you and mourn for your cruel end. My thoughts go out to you in loving remembrance; may the great belief you had in the next world have been with you to the very end!"

Bicaz, July 19th/August 1st, 1918.

A lovely day. I take long walks with Lili Catargi, who is as lively and energetic as I am. I have taken again to wearing Roumanian dress and visit the peasants in their cottages and hold converse with them. They are delighted when I come to their homes and follow me about everywhere. They have such a charming and even poetical way of expressing themselves, and know how to show their loyalty. They are unspoilt, unsophisticated, but are always full of many needs. They have a child-like confidence in my power to help. I never go anywhere with empty hands. I am training my three orphans to go with me and carry my baskets with small gifts.

Round about tea-time General Ballard and M. Mișu came with Colonel Boyle who is to finish his convalescence here in Bicz under my special supervision. We have found a nice, clean little peasant house, not far from ours where he can be lodged. I have sent over a large English arm-chair and a few comforts.

It caused me great emotion to see my old friend again, and I noticed that he too was deeply moved. I could not

judge during this first short meeting how he really was; I only noticed that he let the others talk and spoke very little himself. Formerly he led the conversation.

In the evening I drove out with Nando and Elisabetta. I am always searching for a place to build "the white house of my dreams." To-day I found the place, a gorgeous *Hochplateau* and spread out beneath it a series of heavenly green meadows, which descend gradually in terraces: as background the Ciachleu, our highest mountain. If I built my house on a certain crest I would have a frowning background of mountains and dark forest, grand and forbidding, but before me would be a wide and smiling stretch of green, nothing shut in about it, and yet a magnificent, romantic setting.

I got Nando and Elisabetta to join in my enthusiasm; they agreed it would be the place of places for a lovely white, convent-like house. There is a question of making a dam somewhere on the Bistrița, and then this place would be surrounded by a huge lake. On one side the grassy ridge would run steeply down into the lake, but in front the meadows would not be flooded, and only the last one would run down to the water.

A wondrous place, where one day, so God wills, I shall build "the purified house of my old age" and the name I have chosen for it is "Fata Morgana," as for the moment it is but a frail vision of my imagination; but if my dream comes true I shall stick to the name of "Fata Morgana."

After supper I had a long talk with Mișu about the whole situation, about our hopes and fears. He also told me that Boyle still needs much care and must not be fatigued.

Bicaz, July 20th/August 2nd, 1918.

I took Mignon with me to visit a poor family. We brought them various provisions; this was our morning walk.

At half-past eleven Boyle came to see me. I watched him anxiously. Outwardly he seemed almost unchanged and yet there is some change, more felt than seen. There is no difference in his face and hardly any in his speech. His judgment seems as clear as ever, his arguments just as

precise, his attitude has the same well-known pugnacity. But something has gone from him, some of his magnificent belief in his strength, something of that splendid self-possession and unbending force of will over body and mind formerly his; a certain sadness has crept into his being. He has looked with open eyes upon the end of things. The lightning has touched the mighty oak without having dared to fell it to the ground, but he is no more quite whole and he knows it. It made me sad, and the worst is, it saddens him. In former days he never doubted his strength; to-day he does.

For lunch we had as visitors two of our generals; Nando gave them a "shake up," which they needed. Misfortune is demoralizing.

Prince Stirbey came for a long talk, and as with Mişu yesterday, I went minutely into every aspect of our situation. Intense tact is needed; there is no doubt that luck is to-day on the side of the Entente, but our situation becomes therefore all the more dangerous. Our eyes and ears must be open, but we must be careful of every move; almost of every word.

We finished the day with a picnic at the place of my dream-house. I took my whole party with me and even General Ballard became enthusiastic about the beauty of the site, and Ballard is not a poetical soul, but all the same I made him dream my house with me, perched up against that gorgeous background. We copiously fed the peasants who flocked around us whilst we supped.

Bicaş, Saturday, July 21st/August 3rd, 1918.

Good news from the French front. Soissons has been taken back. Our dear old Berthelot is commanding an army there. He gave *un ordre du jour* for the English troops fighting under his command. It was a great pleasure to read his name.

Boyle, Ballard and Mişu came to lunch. Boyle has become much more silent. I watch him with anxiety. I feel that he has been hard hit and that he is recovering slowly. But really I feel that he knows he will never be quite the same man again, and that this is terrible to him. I must

be careful and not allow him to overtire himself till his strength comes back.

Ileana loves him and he adores the child ; she does not fatigue him, nor need he make great efforts when he talks to her. She and I together took him to the village of Ruginești, situated beyond the river, facing my "Fata Morgana" site. At the very end of this village, right up against the hill, there are a couple of old women I always go to see. They are the poorest of the village and rather looked down upon by those better off. I was attracted by the extreme tininess of their huts. One of the huts especially is absurdly ramshackle, with an over-bulky maize-covered roof. This absurd mud dwelling seems to be expiring beneath the burden of its roof. The old woman who inhabits it has only one foot ; the stump of the other is wrapped in a bit of carpet and she limps along with the aid of a rough staff, a regular old witch.

Her sister lives a little lower down in the same enclosure. She too is the perfect incarnation of a witch, but she is married and lives with a daughter with whom she is everlastingly arguing and quarrelling ; they disagree upon every mortal subject.

The only way of entering their enclosure is over a stile. My two old women and the quarrelsome daughter await me on the farther side ; I am helped over with many exclamations of welcome, and then I am relentlessly kissed on both cheeks, which makes four kisses when I arrive and four when I depart ; as my old ladies are none too clean, these kisses are the least pleasant part of the entertainment.

These old crones are, of course, inveterate gossips, eager to impart all the village news. They have a healthy but not exactly Christian detestation of their neighbours. Having been singled out for royal attention, they, the poorest and most destitute, are experiencing the rather fearful but thrillingly honourable discomfort of being envied. Formerly the most despised of the community, they now find themselves, owing to the Queen's visits, the object of jealousy, a new experience both exciting and uneasy.

All this is told me in many words, and with many tears ; the old body with the single foot weeps copiously. Each

invective is accompanied by expressive pantomiming, and at each imprecation against their defamers they devoutly make the sign of the cross.

With big eyes Ileana listens to their weird talk. I am a thousand times blessed for my generosity, but the evil-minded neighbours are richly cursed in exceedingly picturesque language, worthy of the Old Testament.

To-day, as usual, violent arguments between witch No. 2 and her daughter. This time it was about the younger woman's husband. Like every self-respecting man, he was to-day a soldier in the army, but there seemed to be a hitch somewhere and the old mother became loudly abusive in her accusations against the absent one, and the daughter more and more exasperated; of course it ended in floods of tears and finally the grass widow cried out in her despair: "You, Mother, have a tiny dried-up little heart, black as sin, whilst Mamma Regina's heart is round and red and full of love!" And whilst saying this she illustrated with descriptive gestures the different sizes of our vital organs. Shutting her fist tight, she made us see the despicable size of her mother's, but speaking of the Queen's round red heart, her fingers opened and curved as though clasping a large and precious treasure.

It was as good as a play, but when the atmosphere became too tense with family resentment, I finally suggested food, and this pleasant proposal brought peace back to the party.

Ileana and "Uncle Joe" spread the repast I had brought with me in a basket, he cutting large slices of bread which Ileana solemnly smeared over thickly with raspberry jam.

The old woman with the carpet foot, however, continued to be lachrymose, as weeping seemed to be her chief pleasure, until the moment when I proposed a smoke; at this a toothless grin spread complacently over her wrinkled face—sunshine after clouds.

And there sat the Queen of Roumania on the beaten earth seat before the mud hut with the overwhelming maize roof, an old witch woman on either side of her smoking pleasantly scented cigarettes, all three enjoying this "pipe of peace" with the difference, however, that the tattered

old ladies spat as neatly and cleverly as well-trained sailors playing games on a spotless deck.

At first I felt a bit nervous about this somewhat startling exercise, as we were sitting so very close together, but I was soon reassured when I saw how skilfully they avoided all objects which were not to be touched; their aim was unflinching. So I quietened down and smoked my cigarette to the last puff, humorously enjoying a party which, although not exactly conventional, had become exceedingly genial as it always did when I proposed cigarettes.

Of course on departing I had, as usual, to submit to the sacramental four kisses; two on each cheek.

Colonel Boyle was most amused. Ileana had to translate all they said, and once or twice he broke out into his old happy laugh.

On the way home we fed numerous small children on large round gingerbreads I have specially made by our cook.

Bicaş, Sunday, July 22nd/August 4th, 1918.

My name-day, Mary Magdalene. Glorious weather, but rather too hot. Many flowers were brought and sent me, touching congratulations from great and small. Quantities of telegrams. A breath of hope and expectation is slowly rising again, and I am the chief centre of this hope. I am the flame of resistance; they all know this and the news of Allied victories makes the most timid and disheartened raise their heads again.

Marghiloman appeared all ready for breakfast. Ileana, an ardent little patriot, asked me afterwards how I could bear to sit at the same table with him. "I got up and left as soon as I could," she said—a most withering speech.

A big lunch with many people, not particularly pleasant; as the dining-room is too small we had to lunch on the terrace, and it was fearfully hot, and there was a terrible glare.

After lunch I gave cigarettes to all the soldiers, and my name-day cake to the poor, who came along the road. There are always plenty of them!

In the afternoon we all drove in different motors to the

lovely old monastery of Durau, one of my favourite spots in this valley. It lies off the high road under the Ciachleu.

There are incredible old monks at Durau. I call these "the old funguses." They are so old and rusty that they look mossy and mildewed, and live in incredible little huts. They never open their windows, which are covered over and over with flies. Curiosity once gave me the courage to penetrate into their remotest dwellings, but it was a none too pleasant experience. There is one old monk, however, with a fine face and a long white beard whom I call St. Nicholas, and there is another dear old fellow, very tiny, who wears huge felt shoes. His little house is perfectly clean and has a delightful whitewashed stove, built out of bricks. It has been given all sorts of shapes to fit into the low, crooked little room. I found the tiny little old monk sitting on a wee, three-legged stool, peeling potatoes. I delight in these quaint old places and love to explore every corner. The Staritz was delighted to see me appear on my name-day, and showered blessings down upon my head.

Our life at Bicaz continued outwardly peaceful, but beneath this apparent calm a thousand emotions surged, a thousand anxieties had their place.

The news from the Allied fronts filled me with hope, but the Germans, still masters in our country, tried to intimidate us in every way, and Marghiloman seemed to be playing their game.

I had to be relentlessly watchful, never being sure what new sacrifices or concessions the Government would try to squeeze out of the King. Prince Stirbey and M. Mişu were always on the alert, and kept me as well informed as possible, but being suspected by the actual Government, it was not easy for them to get wind of what was going on, so their task was far from simple.

Ballif, on his side, gave me military news; he too was a real watch-dog, with eyes and ears wide open.

Colonel Boyle and Ileana became ever firmer friends. The visit to the queer old women on the hillside had stimulated their interest in the poor. They called themselves my boy scout and girl guide, and were continually going about

in the smallest and poorest villages, hunting up the most destitute, and when a special case of misery was discovered, I too was called upon to give my aid or advice. Our excellent colonel was very generous with his money, and Ileana, under his intelligent and masterful guidance, did excellent work. She was a willing pupil, and it was very charming to see the earnest-minded child and the warm-hearted old pioneer walking about together in the most forsaken villages, feeding the children, succouring the sick and consoling the old and helpless.

This work with the faithful "Uncle Joe," as she called him, certainly laid the foundation of that desire for service amongst the needy, which developed so strongly in Ileana later on.

Those three months spent at Bicz were full of conflicting emotions, full of small joys and great anxieties. I have written it all down day by day in its minutest detail, and when I turn over the pages of my diary, I live it all over again poignantly.

The sound of rising hope throbs through it all, like anxious heart-beats. The Allied victories meant our liberation, our saving from a dreadful fate. It became ever more essential to cling to our ideal and to keep steady in face of all enemy threats and cruel coercion, and I pitted every ounce of my strength against those who tried to discourage or intimidate the King.

The sovereign was in an exceedingly delicate situation. He felt as we did, that the tide was turning, and that hope was being reborn; slowly but surely. But three-quarters of our country was still in the hands of the enemy which, feeling itself weakening, was all the more ready to bully us as long as we were at its mercy, so the King knew that any too premature signs of joy might lead to disaster. For the moment he still needed the Marghiloman Government to tide over these critical months; above all he had to gain time.

Perhaps Marghiloman was sincere; I was too violently opposed to what he represented to be able to look upon his politics with anything but horror, and I do think that he profited unduly by the King's predicament to force upon him concessions which he knew were inexpressibly painful



ONE OF MY OLD WITCHES.

and sometimes even humiliating. He being an amiable, polite gentleman, with pleasant ways and a smooth tongue, I was always uneasy whenever he was boxed up alone with the King, fearing that he would lull the royal suspicions with his charming manners, "gilding the pill" in such a way that the King would not even realize what disastrous concessions he was making till it was too late.

I was sometimes frantic when I heard all that poor Nando was expected to concede; amongst other things he was to agree that the members of the Government, headed by Bratianu, who had voted for our entry into war on the side of the Entente should be arrested and tried.

Marghiloman, knowing that the King could not for the moment do without him, would continually threaten with his resignation, using this as a means of coercion when the King resisted the demands imposed upon him by the foe.

The King always held out to the utmost limit, and each time he had to give in, he made his Government well understand that he only accepted under coercion, never of his free will. Thus it was only when Bratianu himself, whom the King no more saw, but with whom he was secretly in touch through a neutral diplomat, begged him to do so, that he permitted that the Liberal Ministers should be put on trial. Bratianu, who was far-seeing, had reasons to believe that this legal measure would turn to his advantage in the end.

But His Majesty was not only in secret touch with Bratianu and other politicians friendly to the Entente, but also through trustworthy officers, with General Prezan, with whom, during all this horrible period of outward relinquishing, he was secretly preparing for the possibility of mobilization. I knew this, but never discussed it with the King, being aware of the excessive danger of any talk.

I watched the double game with a beating heart and there were times when the emotional strain was excruciating.

I find in my diary this rather interesting passage written on the first and fourteenth August:

"Prince Stirbey who has been in Jassy returned to-day. Of course he had no end of disagreeable news. Amongst

others he brought me an exceedingly violent article written against me in a Budapest newspaper. I shall stick it into my diary because it will be most exceedingly flattering for me if our cause wins through."

In this virulent article the Hungarian newspaper complains that I went to visit the villages which according to the peace stipulations were to become Hungarian, that I was spreading propaganda against them, that I came with my motor full of gifts, and that the peasants flocking around me had kissed my hands and wept. Finally, when leaving, I had turned to them and said *la revedere* [*au revoir*], which was a sign that I did not seriously recognize the peace conditions. Being a very important member of the Roumanian Dynasty this manifestation on my part was a serious offence, and showed how dangerous it was to leave our family on the throne. The Germans as well as the Austro-Hungarians should insist that we be got rid of, etc. . . . etc. . . .

This article much flustered Marghiloman, who came to complain about me to the King, and although I had not undertaken this trip without royal consent, I had to submit to a certain amount of reprimand, which, however, did not much upset me.

The accusation was true: I *had* visited the villages in the mountains which were to be torn from us, and I *had* gone with a full motor. Most moving and heart-breaking scenes had taken place, and when the weeping peasants flocked around me kissing my hands and deploring their fate, I had said to them that I did not consider this a definite good-bye; that hope lay still before us, and the last word would be spoken by the guns of the Allies.

Imprudent language, no doubt, for a Queen who was supposed to recognize that she was beaten; but I had never recognized this, and could not help declaring to the irate Marghiloman that I was in no wise repentant, and that if I should be put again in the same situation, I would act exactly in the same way. I was building for the future; those unfortunate peasants had needed a word of encouragement in their distress, I their Queen had brought it to them; it was my right; besides that, I never for a moment admitted

that those Roumanian villages would really ever become alien ground.

Marghiloman clasped his hands over his head and looked upon me as a hopeless case, which I was.

Much later our Transylvanians told me that my *la reverende* to those peasants had been to them like a beacon of light in their great darkness.

Two ways of saying the same thing.

I also got into trouble about a two days' excursion I had planned with Carol, taking Mignon and Nicky with me. We decided to go up into the mountains with the officers of Carol's Vânători de Munte battalion and visit all the battle-fields, the officers explaining *sur place* the different attacks and counter-attacks as they had taken place last summer.

Upset by the Budapest newspaper article, the King at the last moment tried to hinder my going. But I explained to him that it was too late; the officers were all expecting me, then bending over him, and giving him a hearty kiss, I said: "Who nothing risks, nothing gains." He looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, lifting one eyebrow right up into his forehead as was his way, and let me go. Here is my description of those two "military" days:

Monday, August 6th/19th, 1918.

A day of physical exertion. We met Carol at Targu Ocna with all his officers. It was boiling hot. Military mountain ponies had been brought for Mignon and me, and we mounted them as best we could in our Roumanian costumes; we looked quite like mountain peasant women, more picturesque than royal. The paths were incredibly steep, but the view from above magnificent. We bravely followed everywhere, no matter how rough the tracks, and unflinchingly stood the most merciless sun, sacrificing our complexions for the good cause.

Carol is excessively precise and systematic, there is never any fluster or confusion; he organizes things according to his desires and convictions, with a certain impressiveness and just a touch of pomposity, very foreign to either of his parents, which occasionally, as his mother, makes me

smile, but which I recognize is quite a good thing on certain occasions. His father was always too humble, not aggressive enough. Carol never doubts that he is right and entirely justified in all he is doing; with this he impresses others and many are ready to follow him. As he is *my* child, I cannot help being a little amused, but I admit that he does everything with a laudable sense of order. He is profoundly systematic and very much convinced and earnest about all he undertakes, which is a good quality, and he knows how to make himself obeyed.

We went over many of the positions where I was in the spring, when the violets were in bloom. The manifold lonely graves have been tidied up, marked with little white birch-wood crosses and are evidently cared for. The officers described each battle to us.

After a large lunch we returned on foot by an incredibly steep and stony path; a great trial to my ankles. Ballif, ever at my side, would allow no other to help me but himself. The heat was excessive and we glowed like red peonies. Our road finally ended in a small churchyard where many fallen officers and soldiers had been buried. Here, beside a small wooden church, a solemn requiem was celebrated for the dead.

There was a great gathering of peasants and soldiers, and the recital of multitudinous prayers. Mignon, after a while, overcome by heat and fatigue, felt giddy and had to be led away, but I, in spite of aching feet, unaccustomed to such steep descents, stood it unflinchingly to the bitter end, though I am at no time over-fond of exaggeratedly long prayers.

I could not, however, be persuaded to accept a very hearty invitation to a military supper, but gratefully took possession of my railway carriage again, where I drank a welcome cup of tea in Mignon's cosy company. We were both feeling healthily exhausted, our cheeks burning like fire because of over-exposure to the mountain sun and wind.

But I am pleased we came; the officers were very glad to have us, and I consider we must keep closely in touch with them; they must feel our sympathy and encouragement during this time of depression.

Tuesday, August 7th/20th, 1918.

We have had a tremendous twelve hours of it. From 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. we were on the go without a moment's pause. Started by motor from Targu Ocna to a certain point, where we found our ponies waiting for us, very steep road, very slippery saddle. Rode as far as we could, and then continued on foot up impossibly difficult and stony tracks to the ancient position of the Coşna: on one side a splendid view over an enormous landscape of mountains, and on the other side down towards the plains. These were the positions the Vânători de Munte had stormed and taken possession of with heavy losses of men and officers. In those days, the mountain-side had been thickly overgrown by forests, now the forests are cut down and the whole place was one mass of gorgeous wild flowers, a regular orgy of colour, a delight to the eye.

At each different point, one or the other of the officers explained how the battles had been fought. The climb was enough to burst my lungs, but the day was much less hot, which was a mercy. Here too there were little graves strewn about everywhere. At each one I said a silent prayer.

We came down on the other side of the hill. Ballif was continually helping me, and so efficacious was his aid that afterwards my arms were black and blue.

The descent was very difficult and a great strain on the knees; but the spirit of our party was exhilarating, and Mignon and I felt perfectly at home amongst all these young fellows who had fought so bravely and come unscathed through such dangers.

As yesterday, lunch was served in a sort of trench, quite a comfortable arrangement; our meal was, however, watered by a violent thunderstorm, which was luckily of short duration, but the downpour was copious enough to turn the dry ground into a slippery danger. Our final descent was most comical. Mignon, who was being helped by a young officer, came down in the mud and the officer fell on her head. There was much laughter and general good-humour.

Another great difficulty was to get our motor, which was waiting for us on a field, safely back out of the mud

on to the high road. We needed the help of all the soldiers available. They ran after us, and at certain risky places actually lifted the heavy car, and at others hung on to it to prevent it skidding into ditches or rolling down steep inclines. It was indeed a risky and exciting experience.

All the time whilst they were exerting themselves alongside of my motor, I kept feeding our hot, eager and joyfully helpful soldiers on sugar which I had in abundance in a sack, for I always carry sugar about with me for the peasants.

Finally we reached the high road without accident, but certainly not without difficulty, and then we raced full speed past Grosavești to Cotofănești, where I wanted to spend a few hours amongst our peasants. We arrived at about six, after having taken affectionate farewell of our officers.

The news of my arrival had spread like wildfire, and all along the way I was stopping to pick up my various ragged friends, who clung on to every available part of my motor. And thus we dashed up to the door of my beloved wooden house, on the threshold of which stood faithful, but disconcertingly outspoken Mme. Ștefănescu, who had been keeping an eye upon my poor. There was the broadest of grins on her jovial face.

Not only had she tidied up my rooms, put flowers in all the vases, but she had even baked an excellent cake. Her language was voluble and picturesque and none too *protocolaire*.

I eagerly inspected the flowers I had planted round the house; many of the sunflowers are already heavy with seed, and the hollyhocks have grown up tall, pink and beautiful; the marigolds and violet petunias make a brave show. My four barefooted "Ioans" followed me about proudly, feeling very "co-possessive." I only wish Ileana were here.

Partook of a hurried tea, to which my *ciobans* were invited, and then hurried off to the cemetery, which is always my first visit. Prince Știrbey joined us there, and all together we went to my special village, Boștea Galea. Each well-known friend had to be visited, beginning of course with old Elisaveta, who was radiant to see me again. Poor consumptive Maria looked terribly pale. Mamma Anica led us into her best

room, and was full of her usual laments. Night was coming on, but I had still to go to what used to be the former hospital where a colony of Scouts were to give me some sort of performance; rather an ordeal after such a long day, but not to be refused. I hurried along the river bank, and finally reached the beautiful poplar grove where our wooden barracks still stood.

The eager Scouts sang songs, danced, recited verses, performed gymnastic exercises. It was now quite dark, and it was the first time I had sat down on a chair since 10 a.m.

We finally supped in the precious wooden house at ten o'clock, feeding on excellent Roumanian dishes cooked by the energetic Mme. Stefanescu. The moon rose glorious and full, flooding my little dwelling with silver light. At eleven I regretfully left it for my train.

Carol parted from us to go back on his own.

On the 15th/28th of *August* I wrote :

On this day two years ago, our mobilization was declared. It is Mignon's name-day, "St. Maria Mare."

The event of the day was that I received a Hungarian gentleman who asked to see me. There had been much hesitation as to whether I should receive him or not; finally it was decided that I should, and that also Carol should see him, so Carol came to lunch from Targu Neamtu.

I received the man in audience at twelve. What he *really* wanted of me I do not know, what he *said* was this: that the Hungarians of the higher classes were indignant about the insulting articles written against me in the Budapest paper: that the whole Hungarian society admired me as Queen, and as a great patriot who had bravely done her duty. It was Fate that had decreed that I had to become their enemy, but Roumanian-Hungarian interests were so closely linked that the countries should try to live in good understanding when the war was over, and become strong and help each other instead of quarrelling. Being both of them agricultural countries they could rise out of chaos more quickly than industrial countries, and if we joined forces we might become strong factors in the remodelling of Europe. Hungary was

sick of war and tired of hating her neighbours, and her greatest grief was that she was at war with England, which she continued to love in spite of the existing state of affairs. I was English and, therefore, a being of superior essence ; it was because of this also that I could magnetize my people and had become a leader etc. . . . etc. . . .

That the moment war was over, I must come to Hungary and that no Queen would ever receive such a reception as the Hungarians would give me !

A strange talk, and I kept wondering what he was *really* driving at, and why I had been chosen to be thus pleaded with and flattered. Who had sent him, what did he represent ?

I said very little, denied having such a preponderant influence in politics, spoke of the unfairness of accusing me of having "made the war," but admitted that I was loved by my people and by the army, having done my duty according to my lights during very difficult times. That I had never hated any nation, but that certainly these monstrous peace conditions had embittered my very soul, and that whilst there were such burning frontier questions it was very difficult to speak of a peaceful understanding, though I agreed with his general conception of goodwill amongst countries. He tried to sweep aside these larger questions, but I remained rather haughtily on my reserve. As to age, I should say he was between forty and forty-five, he had grey hair and a clean-shaven, pleasant face. I cannot, however, remember his name ; I am always bad about remembering names.

Afterwards, comparing notes with Carol, I found he had spoken to him much in the same way. But Carol too could not make out exactly who he was. Both of us have remained rather hazy about what he really wanted, and *who* sent him. Upon whose authority was he speaking ?

The following days were made very miserable by the Marghiloman Government, who, pressed by the enemy, became exceedingly disagreeable to the King, who had refused to sign certain of their horrible and humiliating laws.

We used to discuss by the hour, the King, Prince Stirbey and I, weighing the pros and cons, examining the situation,

our hopes, our fears, planning how to behave, how to meet Marghiloman's demands which often amounted to *chantage*. Prince Stirbey had a very difficult part, as the King counted on his advice, and at this period every counsel had to be deeply pondered over and examined from all sides, so as to steer our difficult way through the many dangers that hemmed us in.

Finally the King left with Prince Stirbey for Jassy, to try and find a way of conciliating his Government without giving way beyond what was tolerable. I saw him go with anxiety and hated to think of the hard debates he would have with his ministers. I so often wished I could be at his side when he had to face his tormentors ; but this was, of course, never possible.

Whatever legends may have been related about me, I never broke in upon an audience, but it has happened that at some particularly anxious or crucial moment, I have sent the King a little letter, message or note, which was to be given him *during* the debate, so as to keep up his courage or warn him against some special danger.

We were now well into September and the news from the Allied fronts was more and more reassuring ; fearful battles were being fought, but all the successes were now to our advantage, and the good news reached us little by little, in spite of the German barrage. It became more and more difficult to stand our actual Government, which was trying to hold fast to a lost cause, desperate of course at being in the wrong, but not daring to change face.

The autumn was one of those glorious Roumanian autumns, so full of colour and sunshine. Our stay at Bicaz had done us a wonderful lot of good. I was feeling extraordinarily well, my body of steel ; my very blood seemed to tingle with redoubled life, my mind was alert, expectant, and a feeling of excitement ran as an undercurrent through every outward action of our quiet, everyday life.

I continued to go amongst the peasants, who met me everywhere with touching confidence. I took long walks, drives, and rides, searched for wild flowers and eagerly explored all the beauties of the mountain region. Ballif had procured for us some military mountain ponies, and on these,

astride, in my peasant's dress, with one or the other of my children, or with Lili Catargi, I would discover marvellous sites which could only be reached thus or on foot.

I must admit that though inordinately fond of riding, I was never a very good walker; I shied at long climbs, but I adored roaming about over hill and dale, mounted on these agile ponies, for which no track was too steep and no descent too precipitous. To start off on unknown paths gave me a feeling of delightfully unrestrained liberty, and thus mounted I have discovered gorgeously beautiful places where I longed to linger, but to which I was not destined to return.

I remember especially one ride with Mignon and Lili Catargi, along a lovely, wild, forsaken-looking valley, right up into the mountains, winding our way through a stupendous beech forest, finally following a rough track which brought us down behind my "Fata Morgana" site. The last part was over a narrow crest, a path leading through night-black firs. The beauty of this ride has remained with me for all time; I shall never forget it. I could have shouted aloud with the joy of it and my two young companions joined in with my ecstasy.

I like being with the young. Strong, indefatigable and blessed with an even temper and uncrushable high spirits, I make a good leader, as well as a pleasant companion. I feel no age when I go out thus into the wilds of nature, and the young, because of their love of adventure, are dearer to me than the cautious, who try to enchain me with restrictions and hesitations.

There was also another ride I love to look back upon. This one was also up one of these mysterious and lovely little valleys branching out from the central valley, with a stream rushing through it, making a lot of fuss and noise, tumbling over large rocks and fallen trees, a wild little river full of life and fun.

Up to a certain distance the road was quite possible, and we passed through a charming little village with a picturesque old church. The houses were embedded in fruit trees, heavy with red-cheeked apples or lovely blue plums with a bloom on them almost like a butterfly's wing. As we entered the forest, the road became very bad and finally almost impassable, not

that it was specially steep, but it had been overlaid with round beams, and these, because of the nearness of the river, were rotting away and had become exceedingly slippery.

It was hard going, and we had often to get off our ponies and walk beside them, but the forest was so grand, the leaping little stream so full of gay enchantment, that I could not resign myself to giving up and turning back. So slipping, stumbling and breathless we pushed on; Mignon and Nicky were with me, two uncomplaining companions, my daughter flagging occasionally, but Nicky as keen as I for any adventure.

Finally we came out upon a clearing in the forest, a small green meadow, and here we discovered a wee, wooden monastery, tiny, grey and forsaken, guarded by a few rusty old monks in threadbare cassocks, comparable only to my old "funguses" of Durau.

This was not at all like everyday life, but as though we had suddenly penetrated into a long-forgotten fairy story, away from every reality. The monks blinked at us, hardly believing their eyes. When they understood who we were, there was a good deal of genuflexion and one of the mildewed old fellows shuffled off to sound a plaintive little bell, which seemed to call out its astonishment, while endeavouring to be impressive and welcoming.

We sat down for a while on the edge of the meadow, allowing our horses to rest, whilst they eagerly cropped the short grass and we fitfully chatted with the bewildered old recluses.

But we could not tarry long, for we had a long and arduous return journey to make. But in spite of the fatigue and of the exceeding discomfort of the round-logged bridge road, we felt fully recompensed for our undismayed efforts.

The King was very much interested in the description of our monastic discovery and wished he had been with us, but I am not sure he would have enjoyed our slippery log road.

Chapter XXX

DIRE TRAGEDY: "ROMÂNIA MARE"

AND here I come to an exceedingly distressful hour in our life—my pen hesitates before it.

An almost insurmountable grief came to us on the 2nd-15th of September, a staggering family tragedy which hit us suddenly, a stunning blow for which we were entirely unprepared.

It is so heartrending a story that I have not the courage to tell it here; maybe I shall never tell it, although it has been written, hour for hour, in my faithful, perhaps all-too-faithful, diary.

I have had many difficult battles to wage, but this was the most terrible of all, because it meant that we had to fight against one of our own, to save him against his own will.

The King and I, surrounded by those most devoted to us, lived through agonizing days when all the different tragedies we had been through seemed but a prelude to what we were facing to-day.

I shall say no more; this, however, I must add; in that most cruel of hours I learnt to know humanity as never before. Some showed both courage and devotion beyond all praise, but there were others, those we imagined we could count upon, who "howled with the wolves," who were merciless, unfeeling, and worse still, trivial and petty.

It is interesting, but also painful, to watch how each separate being will react at a moment of superlative trial; characters reveal themselves at such hours, and one suddenly sees people as they really are, with their masks off, stripped of their everyday decorum and pretences. It left me a wiser and sadder woman.

For myself I can only say that, finding myself up against terrible odds, I knew I must fight. And I did so, my back

to the wall, desperately, a creature at bay, knowing well that those who opposed me had strong arguments on their side.

At that hour I knew the lioness feeling, the overpowering, ferocious tenacity of a mother-creature defending its young. But it was a heartrending struggle because the one I was fighting for had forsaken me suddenly after having been my best friend, my fellow-worker ; my central hope.

No, the story does not bear telling to-day ; but to all those who helped us, who stood by us, understood the agony of a mother's heart and of a King's wounded pride, I would like to express my thanks. Some are no more of this world, others have been torn out of my life by a relentless fate, but to one and all, to the living and to the dead, I say : "Thank you : by being what you were, you saved my belief in humanity, you helped me to carry on. . . ."

This also must be said, or there would be no truth in the tale I have undertaken to tell ; the final struggle for our country, the last convulsive effort to cast off our chains, to come in again on the winning side, sword in hand, was overcast, darkened, tortured by this inner grief which so tragically intermingled with the wild ecstasy of being at last rid of the enemy, of at last being able to lift up our heads again ; the yoke broken ; liberated, free !

But now I must return to the outward side of my tale, because there is still a lot to tell.

Bicaș, Sunday, 16th/29th September, 1918.

Beautiful weather. Excellent news from all the fronts which interests us, but everything is darkened because of our personal trouble. The Allied troops are advancing everywhere, in Belgium, on the Somme and on other parts of the Western Front. They are advancing also in Macedonia and Palestine. But what is the most important as far as we are concerned ; Bulgaria is asking for peace ! For the first time we really see light ahead ; we have walked so long in darkness.

Marghiloman appeared decidedly inclined to be more conciliatory, so an immediate crisis is not to be feared, though excitement is running high and I feel the whirling of separate currents. We have, therefore, to be doubly steady and to

keep our eyes as well as our ears wide open. In fact, we must be continually on the alert.

I advised Nando to talk to all our A.D.C.s and to explain to them exactly what attitude we were taking about our present grief, and that we expected our household to stand or fall with us, as at this bitterest of all moments we needed the utmost loyalty *inside* our house, so as to be strong against attacks coming from outside. Those who did not feel one with us were to say so and leave.

Marghiloman remained for lunch, and afterwards I had a talk with him. Up to the present I had avoided this, being afraid of saying things which later could never be forgotten. To-day, knowing through the King that he had partially come round, I took the bull by the horns and said I was glad to hear that he meant to stand by us in this great trial which had come to us, so that we should have time to settle it with what we considered justice towards the offender, and in accordance with our dignity as sovereigns. He answered quite loyally, so that instead of treating him as an enemy I treated him as a friend, which was perhaps wiser, and was certainly kinder, and this means more to me.

Prince Stirbey, M. Mişu, Ballif and Boyle have been a great help to us during this terrible crisis. Stirbey fought heroically to help us through.

Bicaş, September 18th/October 1st, 1918.

Cambrai has fallen! The Bulgarians have accepted the sweeping peace conditions of the Allies. We must hope that Turkey will also have to give in.

I supped at the Stirbeys' small house to rejoice with them over this good news.

Bicaş, September 20th/October 3rd, 1918.

News from all the fronts is almost overwhelmingly satisfactory for the Allies. St. Quentin, Cambrai have fallen. The Germans left both beautiful old towns in flames.

These victories fill us, the subjugated, tormented, humiliated ones, with fearful hope, but at the same time we must be prepared for anything, because our invaders must sense that we are beginning to take long breaths of relief, and they will

try to make us as inoffensive as possible. Max of Baden has become Reichskanzler. It seems there is some change in the form of the German Reichstag, but exactly what I have not grasped. Great events may be imminent, but we must hold tight and be very careful.

Bicaş, Friday, September 21st/October 4th, 1918.

The sensational news to-day is that Ferdinand of Bulgaria has abdicated in favour of his son Boris, who was immediately crowned in Sofia! Ferdinand is already on his way to Hungary. We have no details of whether he abdicated under pressure or of his own free will. Was it the Germans, the Bulgarians or the Allies who persuaded him to leave?

I am suddenly feeling tired and must take a little rest.

Bicaş, Sunday, September 23rd/October 6th, 1918.

Max of Baden, the new Reichskanzler, has agreed to treat for peace on the basis Wilson has put forth. What is to come of all this, and what will our poor country still have to suffer?

We are all tense with excitement; events seem to come with a rush.

Bicaş, Monday, September 24th/October 7th, 1918.

Had a long, serious talk with Prince Stirbey; events are precipitating themselves. (I believe this is a French expression, but I am too excited to write decently in any language.) Fresh horizons are opening before us. Now comes a moment when one must be steady in every way and not lose one's head.

I am almost giddy when I think of the approaching light. But not having lost my head during times of disaster, I really must not do so now that luck is turning our way.

Bicaş, Tuesday, September 25th/October 8th, 1918.

Days full of tense but silent excitement. All that is going on in the world just now actually means life or death to us, slavery or liberation. We simply palpitate between glorious hope and deadly dread, but we must try to keep outwardly calm because our country is still bristling with enemies.

Nando had a long audience with Costica Arion, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and kept him to lunch. He and I sparred away at each other with sweet smiles and words which meant more than what was really said. Their feelings towards me to-day must be complex. As patriots they have to rejoice that things are turning my way, but having up to now condemned my attitude, they do not, of course, know exactly what attitude to assume.

Bicaş, Wednesday, September 26th/October 9th, 1918.

This is the news received to-day :

Advance on all the fronts ; the Serbians are near Nish. In Turkey, the Government has been overthrown, important events are expected there.

The French continue to advance, the Germans are forsaking their strongest positions.

After dinner started off by train from Piatra to Jassy for a *parastas* for old Uncle Carol.

Jassy, Thursday, September 27th/October 10th, 1918.

Arrived early at Jassy. Had breakfast in my house and at half-past eleven drove to the "Metropolie" for the requiem in a fearful downpour. It poured in such torrents that the streets became rushing rivers.

In church a curious feeling overcame me. I looked down from my throne with an uncanny sensation of growing power, knowing that my day was approaching. And I am ashamed to say that I was seized with a quite unworthy feeling of contempt towards all those who had tried to fight me, my ideals, and my aims ; all those politicians seemed small to me and despicable. At the same time I knew this was a feeling I must not give way to ; it was against all my ideas of decently playing the game.

When Colonel Boyle came to see me in the afternoon, I confessed to him what had suddenly come over me in church. He looked me squarely in the eye, and with a very grim mouth said to me : "Your Majesty, you have been a good loser, let me also find you a good winner," and I felt ashamed of the unfamiliar hardness which was, quite unexpectedly, growing up in my heart.

Many people came to see me, amongst others General Vaitoianu and Professor Panaitescu. It can well be imagined how emotional our conversations were. These two were always among the most faithful of my followers, each in his different way.

Bicaz, October 1st/14th, 1918.

For the moment none of the Allies have accepted the offer of an armistice. There are fearful battles being waged on all the fronts. French troops have entered Sofia, the Allies are advancing in Serbia and Albania. Turkey is going to pieces ; in Palestine, her armies are almost completely destroyed. The German front is at last crumbling everywhere. Conflicting news from beyond our German barrier ; from the occupied parts of the country. Some say that the enemy is getting ready to leave, others on the contrary declare that our oppressors are more tyrannical and insolent than ever.

About this time the "Spanish flu" began to show itself amongst the peasants. At times I would find a whole household down with it. Dr. Mamulea caught it himself, and was miserably ill. But we had not yet in the least understood what a deadly sickness it was, and I used to go about everywhere with Ileana, visiting the poorest houses, followed by Boyle and Nini, Ileana's nurse. I tried to give them quinine, but it is very difficult to get a peasant to take any medicine outside a hospital.

The days were getting much shorter and the autumn colouring was a marvellous glory. I moved about a lot, taking long walks or drives and helping the peasants wherever I went. It was thus that I best stood that inner excitement about events that were taking place, and also the grief which was continually gnawing at my heart.

In the village of Bicaz I had also a special friend, rather of the same category as the two old witch-women on the hillside, but this human curio was a road-mender and certainly an original. He went by the name of Mos Cerbu (pronounced Therbu) and he too was ancient and grimy beyond description.

Mos Cerbu was what is called a "character," but my

household was rather horrified that I should hob-nob with so ragged an old fellow.

I once gave him a padded, khaki-coloured, Russian jacket, and as Mos Cerbu's habits were none too cleanly and as he dwelt in a leaking shack on the river's edge, this Russian jacket had become a disgrace, but was astonishingly in keeping with the old boy's shaggy and unkempt beard ; both seemed to have more or less the same colour.

Those, however, who despised him because of his filthy Russian jacket and unappetizing beard, missed a great deal, because for all his grime Mos Cerbu was both a philosopher and a poetical soul.

Unfortunately he snuffled when he talked, so that much of his wisdom was lost upon me, when he entertained me with his meandering discourse which apparently had no beginning and no end, but I had, all the same, understood that he had vast and ambitious projects for beautifying the Bistrița valley, which was his pride.

He had some weird plan of how the Ciachleu (our highest mountain) could be lighted at night with an artificial sun, and in some mysterious way all these improvements and inventions were to heighten my glory and queenly prestige. He also wanted to encourage national dances in costume ; the women of the village were to come and show off both their art and their dress in the royal court-yard.

But the women of the village would have nothing to do with Mos Cerbu : they despised him as thoroughly as did those at court, nor, because of his snuffles, could I always closely follow up all his arguments. Being aggressively independent of thought, and therefore not always strictly disciplined, the authorities and Mos Cerbu were continually up against each other, and then I was called upon to settle the differences.

One of the chief accusations against Mos Cerbu was that he could not be got to leave the churchyard in peace. Old Cerbu had a quite unique feeling about the dead, and evidently had no fear of ghosts, because he often spent his nights digging about amongst the graves. This was reported to me and I had to interview my ragged protégé upon the subject. He asked me to come with him to the village cemetery, and

there, *sur place*, amongst the little green mounds, scratching the back of his dishevelled head, he explained to me what the controversy had been about.

It seems there had been a dozen soldiers buried here, but just anyhow, so in the night he had dug them up and laid them straight. All through life, he declared, they had had to walk in line, so it was only right and fair that, dead, they should lie tidily one beside the other, so that when the Great Call came, they should be in correct military order !

This argument was certainly to the point, and I tried to convince his accusers that in principle, at least, if not in fact, Cerbu was right, his intentions good, and it was as well to leave it at that. But I advised my grimy friend henceforth to leave the dead in peace.

To Ballif's honour, let it be said, that the humorous side of him shared my sympathy for Mos Cerbu, so that he was inclined to forgive his offences, nor did he turn up his nose more than was necessary over the Russian coat. To me, Mos Cerbu was certainly a joy and an entertainment !

Although this has nothing to do with actuality, it is quaint to relate that my acquaintance with Mos Cerbu did not end with our departure from Bicaz. For several years afterwards, to the horror of the whole of Cotroceni, he would find his way to the capital and pay me a spring visit.

Although other clothes had been given him, the favourite Russian jacket was still to the fore, and the old fellow had as much as ever to relate, but the snuffles had increased so I understood him less and less. To the utmost disgust of my self-respecting servants I gave orders that each time he came, Mos Cerbu should be a guest under my roof for three days.

On his last visit, when he departed he took everything with him ; bed-clothes, towels, even the basin, soap, water-bottle and tumbler, and when asked the reason for this licence, he declared that the Queen had said everything in his room was his. When searching questions were put me as to whether this were strictly the truth, I raised my shoulders, spreading out my hands palms upwards : "Don't be too inquiring," I begged, "Mos Cerbu tells and asks me so many things, and his speech is so confusing ; besides, I am generally in a hurry, so that it is quite possible that amongst other things

he has asked me if the things in his room belonged to him ; let us leave it at that ! One thing is certain, we shall not be much poorer, but Mos Cerbu certainly richer for having carried off the household sheets ; it is a pity he could not carry off the bed as well, because I hardly think he is very comfortable in his shack by the river."

In this I had been all too right, because next spring old Mos Cerbu did not reappear, and on making inquiries I learnt with sadness that the old fellow had died, probably of cold, during the last awful winter, when neither the Queen's blankets nor the precious Russian coat had been able to keep him warm. . . .

So much for Mos Cerbu.

Bicaş, October 9th/22nd, 1918.

The news to-day is wonderful ! It is hardly to be believed ; the Allies are already at Vidin and Rustuk, on the other side of the Danube ! They are also at Adrianople and are marching towards Constantinople in conjunction with other troops that have landed at Dedeagaci. A French aviator has flown over Jassy with messages. All this is tremendous news for us, makes us tremble with excitement and expectation. The Allies on the Danube, opposite our country, and I am not there to receive them with shouts of joy !

Bicaş, Wednesday, 10th/23rd October, 1918.

News more and more exciting. The aviator who flew over to Jassy was from Salonica and brought me a short message from my good friend Radu Rossetti, in which he also sends me a word from George (King of England). They hope to find us ready when they give the sign from over there.

George promises that Roumania will not be forgotten. His note is written very small on a tiny piece of paper. It was written in July. There was also a little slip of a note from our dear old Leila Milne (the children's governess).

Had an important talk with Prince Stirbey and the King ; it was a difficult conversation, because certain terribly weighty decisions have to be made, and Nando is not a man of action.



KING FERDINAND.

But just now each hour may count. Sometimes during these encounters I have the sensation that my hair is literally turning grey, to such a degree must I take myself in hand not to lose my self-control : it is an almost superhuman effort.

It is absurd to say so, but at those moments I have the same feeling as when I am riding an intensely difficult horse. No movement must be wrong, not even the jerk of a rein—there must be perfect calm, perfect balance.

So many things torture my mind just now, because alongside of the country's need, is also the need of the one I am trying to help. I *must* win through. Sometimes I actually have to lean my head against the wall and to call upon God to give me more patience that is naturally mine, and more tact than goes with my too-frank character which yearns for naked truth.

In the evening the King left for Jassy with Prince Stirbey. I longed to go with them, but at present I must keep things steady here. I am considered a chief factor in my country's welfare ; all through I have been the centre of manly opposition, the centre of unbending loyalty towards the Allies, and must therefore only appear officially on the scene again at the right moment, which has not yet come. Whatever my excitement may be, for the present I must still lie low. But Prince Stirbey has given me his word that he will see to it that I am called if my presence can be helpful in any way. For the moment I can help best by remaining utterly steady.

Bicaş, Thursday, October 11th/24th, 1918.

The Allies are advancing everywhere. In Bucarest the excitement is great. Hope at last is rising in every heart. To have friends on the other side of the Danube is wonderful ; if only Constantinople would fall, then we should be no more choked, cut off, starved out !

Bicaş, Sunday, October 14th/27th, 1918.

Nicky arrived early from Jassy bringing interesting letters from Nando and Stirbey. Victor Antonescu, our former Minister in Paris, flew over with a French aviator to Jassy bringing messages. His presence has, however, been kept a secret, and he is hidden somewhere in Jassy. He is going to

fly back with an answer, and another aviator will be coming to fetch Flers. All this is intensely exciting and it is a wonderful feeling to know that we are again in touch with friends after a silence which was very much like being throttled or buried alive.

Elisabetta is down with a mild form of the Spanish flu, also the Stirbey daughters and Mlle. Florescu, Ileana's school-mistress. I went to visit the Stirbeys; they were feeling very miserable, especially Marie, the eldest, who is delicate.

I was asked from Jassy by the King to telegraph to Clemenceau; it is considered that, being what I am, a telegram from me at this crucial moment would have more effect than coming from anyone else in this country, even from the King. I composed it in my own energetic and somewhat drastic style, which Clemenceau, of all people, should be able to appreciate!

The train between Lille and Paris has begun to run again, the first for four years!

The Germans are seriously thinking of modifying their constitution. They are still trying to be conciliatory, although Wilson's answers are getting harder and harder.

Bicaş, 16th/29th October, 1918.

My forty-third birthday. I'm getting old, which is a pity, for I have still such a lot to do; a pity also because each year must inevitably take from me something of my good looks. My people always considered me pretty, and were proud of me, *notre belle Reine*. In a way it was considered one of my royal duties to please their eye, and yet it is the only duty for which I cannot be held responsible! When I have lost all my good looks they are sure to imagine it is my fault, nor will they pause to think that it will be sadder for me than for them. I have never been specially vain, but my face has been like a friend, and if it changes it will be like living with someone who is a stranger to me, and it will be horrid!

I once heard a lady say whilst powdering her face to very little effect: "*Que c'est bête de vieillir!*" and it is just the feeling one has; it is stupid, unnecessary!

Pouring rain; Nando arrived early from Jassy, feeling cold and rather absent-minded, forgetting to congratulate me,

although he had come all the way from town to do so. Finally when he remembered, he explained that he had not been able to think of any sort of present to bring, but he supposed I'd best like some money for my poor, only he did not know where his money was, etc. . . . He was absurdly his own vague self, and I could not help giving him a hug, which made him look at me quizzically, one eyebrow drawn right up into his forehead, having not entirely fathomed what my hug really meant. I was, however, able to squeeze a bit of news out of him, but only in tit-bits, disconnected crumbs which I had to piece together as best I could.

I receive, of course, endless telegrams, and they all make allusions to our rising hopes, and to my being the very centre of these hopes. A big lunch, but it continued raining all day.

Exciting political news : Austria, as far as we can understand, is offering separate, unconditional peace, which means, I suppose, peace at any cost. Whether this is good for *us*, I cannot yet judge ; anyhow, events seem to follow each other quickly and we must be prepared for anything and everything.

After supper Nando left again with Prince Stirbey, and I went rather exhausted to bed.

What may my forty-fourth year bring me ?

I actually received a telegram from George of England.

Bicaz, Wednesday, 17th/30th October, 1918.

Austria has turned traitor to Germany ! Somehow I think this is dreadful. Germany is my enemy, but to-day I am sorry for her. She kept all the others on their feet, she was the backbone. Some things are terrible to think about ; to be forsaken by your closest Ally. . . !

Nicky telephoned from Jassy that there are inundations and interruptions on the railways. So we are wondering if we shall be able to get to town for Mircea's *parastas* on Saturday.

Bicaz, Friday, October 19th/November 1st, 1918.

The longed-for event has come about, the Turks have surrendered, the Dardanelles are open, we are no more cut off from everything, suffocated ; there are hopes now that we shall not starve ! This is the news of news I have been wait-

ing for. This was the great event we have been looking forward to ; as far as we were concerned, this was the most important of all. There is now at least one passage open, one of the barriers down ; we can breathe again, we can get through to the outside world. As though liberated after a siege, we feel like shouting for joy, but for all that we are sober in our outward manifestations. Even Ballif, the conscientious pessimist, one who never likes to concede to what others consider good news, admits that this is at last something to rejoice over.

Austria is rapidly falling to pieces. What astonishing and fearful events ! It all seems to be turning our way, but as yet I cannot quite grasp it ; it is all coming so quickly, it is so overwhelming, so difficult to conceive.

After tremendous rain it was a gorgeous day. I went with Simky and Lili Catargi to "Fata Morgana." I wanted for a last time to absorb all its beauty, which was even more wonderful to-day with its grand autumn colouring. It is Lili's last day with me, and she felt very near tears. She has been my constant companion, and a very dear one, in spite of the disparity of age, which used to make others smile. Her bright, rather passionate youth, which is sending out feelers on every side, was what I needed at this period of high pressure. There were too many pessimists about, I needed her glorious belief in me, which carried her right into her own dreams. She has all the vivacity and love of life I had as a girl ; besides, her devotion to me warms my heart. I defy anyone not to appreciate being exultantly loved ; it is so exhilarating !

At ten we started for Jassy.

Jassy, Saturday, October 20th/November 2nd, 1918.

Arrived early with streaming sunshine. All Souls' Day, and it was the day little Mircea chose to fly away from this earth ; little Mircea who was to have lived to become a man, to be a joy to us and of use to his country. But this was not to be, and perhaps God knows best. It is not so simple a thing to become a good man. . . .

He is waiting for us over there in the old church : Mircea, we are perhaps coming back to you soon !

An atmosphere of excitement pervades the town ; it met us at the station. The falling to pieces of Austria has, of course, raised national hopes to the highest degree. But we still have difficult hours before us, and we must try to keep our people steady, which is not easy, because their imagination is a flame and their patience has been sorely tried.

Somehow I am calmer than the others. This is probably because although outwardly I had to comply with the attitude our country was obliged to adopt, I was never for a single instant resigned to the German rule, nor did I believe it would last. I never, not even in my weakest moments, agreed with certain things that were being done. Therefore I am not so inclined to lose my head to-day.

After breakfast, Prince Stirbey came to have a talk with me in the King's presence, drawing a very clear and precise picture of the situation. The great danger is that Bolshevism, which surrounds us on every side, might also gain our country.

The Germans, on the occupied side, are doing all they can to spread it. It is the chief danger, and for the moment we do not know how near the Allied armies are ; their advent would be our saving, even if it would mean war on our territory, which although terrible would be better than blindly destructive and all-overthrowing revolution. Stirbey has a real talent for summing up a situation in a few words.

We thank him for bringing all sides of the picture before us. Of course, *tous les fidèles* had flocked to the church for the *parastas*, and I believe that in most minds, as in mine, was the thought that perhaps it would not be long before we should return to Mircea's grave.

Boyle came to see me in the afternoon, also Poklevski, and we talked over the possibility of getting Aunt Minnie (the Dowager Empress) safely out of the Crimea. Boyle is ready to undertake this, he is just the man for a daring job of this kind. I promised to help in every way, to obtain a Roumanian ship, etc., also to get things ready for Aunt Minnie and any other members of the family, if they can be induced to leave Russia. Boyle will start on this mission as soon as possible.

At eleven I left again for Bicaz with Mignon and Nicky.

Bicaz, Tuesday, October 23rd/November 5th, 1918.

The Austrians have accepted a truce with the Italians, giving in to quite terrible peace conditions. Hungary has declared herself a Republic. Extraordinary and chaotic things are going on in Austria. Exactly what is happening in Germany, is, for the moment, not clearly to be seen.

What sort of Europe is to emerge out of all this? I cannot help feeling rather anxious. My thoughts go out constantly to Mamma. What is she thinking of all this? What is she going through? And Ducky?

Bicaz, Wednesday, October 24th/November 6th, 1918.

The Marghiloman Government has fallen at last! General Coanda is forming a cabinet with Vaitoianu, Fotin Enescu and others. It was all done quickly and secretly in a few hours, everything having been well prepared beforehand; a sigh of relief mounted from many a heart. It is almost too good to be true to have friends in power again. I do not know what the programme of this Government is to be, I only hope that no mistakes will be made. I know there are real patriots on watch, close beside the King, keeping him steady, helping him with every move. Nothing is being done *à la légère*, I know this. St.-Aulaire was in the plot, I believe, so was Sir George Barclay. Stirbey must have had his hands full. I feel quite queer, being out of it all, I am generally there *sur place*. But it is better thus. No one can then accuse me of influencing the King. This is men's work. I forgot to say that Grigorescu, the hero of Mărășești, is Minister of War. How proud he must be!

Spent the whole afternoon paying good-bye visits to my different poor. I would like to rush off to shut up my Cotofănești house and visit my poor there, but I received orders from Jassy not to move from Bicaz. What events are taking place?

Bicaz, Thursday, October 25th/November 7th, 1918.

Have decided to leave for Jassy on Sunday. I cannot remain away any longer, it is all too overpoweringly exciting

and everything is happening so quickly. I must be with them all now, sharing the joy.

I believe Germany is being brought to her knees. She is being abandoned by everybody. Austria's capitulation has opened her southern frontiers. Bavaria is in danger. On the Western Front Allied armies continue to advance. Some of our troops have been called into Bucovina to keep order. All our Roumanians beyond the old frontiers are declaring themselves free to unite in one big nation. The dream of "România Mare" seems to be becoming a reality. It is all so incredible that I hardly dare to believe it. We have been so accustomed to disaster and trouble since the War began that it is hard to believe that our great hour may be near !

I always believed in the final victory of the Allies, I was one of those who never doubted even in the darkest hour, but I never had visions about myself as the realizer of the " Greater Roumania " dream. I always saw myself sharing my people's troubles and vicissitudes, but somehow never pictured myself at the final hour of success, though once long ago, I had pronounced these dangerous words : " I am one of those who win." I was told it was defying Fate. Am I really to be a winner ? The thought almost makes me afraid.

And curiously enough, I have always thought of the hour of victory as a sad hour. You can only be victorious at another's expense, and instinctively I am sorry for that other.

I hate my enemy when he is triumphant, not when he is beaten, then he fills me with intolerable and devastating pity.

The King has proclaimed universal suffrage and land for the peasants. I am pleased he has done this without either Brătianu or Averescu in power, so that it should be his name alone which will remain attached to these reforms ; the name of the modest, timid, doubting but honest and unselfish Ferdinand I. If he can also realize the unity of all the Roumanians, then indeed he will find his recompense for the great sacrifice he made when he declared war.

My heart is too full to put everything down clearly. I must wait till I can reach Jassy and I shall be told everything in detail. What a busy time Prince Stirbey and Mișu must have had !

Stirbey is certainly one who will have won his spurs if we come out on top. He has worked and slaved unceasingly these two dreadful years, or perhaps I should say four years, because there were also the two years of neutrality, which were difficult enough. And at heart he is a pessimist. But his great strength is a quiet and tenacious persistence, rare in his race.

Whether my great desire that we should stand again sword in hand beside the Allies is to be realized, remains to be seen. Germany seems to be giving way so completely that no more fighting will be necessary, either here or elsewhere. Yet there may be a plan on foot of which I know nothing, I cannot help hoping there is.

If only that great grief I carry about with me day and night could be rolled away. But how save one who does not wish to be saved? How bitterly cruel it is!

Bicaș, Saturday, October 27th/November 9th, 1918.

I received endless enthusiastic telegrams. The old cry of "Empress of all the Roumanians" has begun again with fresh enthusiasm, and with a little more reason than two years ago. Wilson has publicly declared that he will stand for Roumania's right to unite all her people. Strange what power is being given to Wilson, a man from beyond the seas!

The excitement is growing, growing. I find it difficult to remain here now, but I shall soon be in the midst of the fray and with my muzzle off. Oh, this means something to me; I never entirely hid my feelings, but I often had to be dumb when my blood was boiling with indignation and revolt.

In order to be able to control my unrest, I go about amongst the poor, dividing up my last provisions. I have been to my queer old, tattered women on the hillside and left rich stores for the winter; I also want to say good-bye to the sad but intelligent, little consumptive boy who used to run away from his hospital, doing many miles on foot, to see "Mamma Regina." I go into each valley in turns and take leave of all my humble friends and their blessings are showered over me.

Ileana, on her side, has been going daily to her protégés, faithfully carrying on the work begun with "Uncle Joe."

This afternoon I met a transport of Italian prisoners, stopped my motor and gave them cigarettes and was lustily cheered. Later another lot arrived at Bicaz. They had not eaten for twenty-four hours and I had them fed upon whatever could be found, no easy matter, as there is a scarcity of provisions.

And before going to bed I received from Prince Stirbey the glorious news that the Allies, with my friend Radu Rossetti, have crossed the Danube into our country ! I have no further details, but this is the news I have been waiting for with feverish anxiety.

Bicaz, Sunday, October 28th/November 10th, 1918.

My last day at Bicaz ; the house is being dismantled and looks horribly dismal.

Our general mobilization has been ordered ! Hurrah ! We are once more openly with our Allies, we take up our rank again amongst the combatants. The Germans have been called upon to evacuate the country, to surrender, or to fight ! What will follow remains to be seen.

Kaiser Wilhelm and the Crown Prince have abdicated ! It seems impossible. Proud Cousin Bill ! I cannot say that I like it ! No doubt it is a logical end, but I, for one, like a country to stand and fall with its ruler, its King, a father with his family.

Kaiser Wilhelm tried to destroy us, but I did not want to see him destroyed. I wanted to see him beaten : yes, that I passionately desired because he wished to have this country wiped off the face of the earth. For us he represented a brutal, a merciless tyranny ; he had also about him something of the proverbial "pride which goes before a fall." But in his way he was a force. There was something about his too exuberant energy for which I always had a certain sympathy. But there were other sides of him I could not abide. But honestly I do not like to hear of his abdication. It hurts me somehow. Perhaps it is solidarity of caste, because certainly there was no special love lost between us.

To-day when I went my rounds amongst the poor, I was everywhere cheered by the peasants who were being mobilized. They were going off stolidly from their homes

again without complaint. Patient creatures, I admire them. I gave them cigarettes and had my motor brimful of things for the women and children.

Returned to an absolutely dismantled house, and after supper off to Piatra to take the train to Jassy.

Jassy, Monday, October 29th/November 11th, 1918.

A tremendous day lies behind me ! I was asked to arrive at Jassy at a later hour than had been fixed ; I supposed it was because of the mobilization and transport of troops. But the reason was that a tremendous reception had been prepared for me ; what a reception, and what enthusiasm !

I tumbled out of the train straight into Nando's arms and then I found myself facing General Coanda, our new Prime Minister, and St.-Aulaire. All the Frenchmen who had remained in Jassy had gathered together, and they were at last in uniform once more. There was a deputation of Transylvanians headed by Mihai Popovici, Ion Vescan and Chiroin. They offered me a bouquet of flowers and out of the fullness of their hearts they glorified me as "The Guardian Angel of our Great National Dream ; the one who through every adversity had never weakened or lost hope and who, like a beacon, had led them through darkness to the great hour of light."

And always it was with these words that I was thanked, all through the day. . . . There were also masses of ladies, officers, professors, students.

Everybody seemed to want to make a speech, but could not be heard because of the cheering. There was such a noise, such a crush, so much enthusiasm that I felt inclined both to weep and to laugh. After the long oppression, to be able to breathe freely again, to be able to rejoice after so much suffering, to be able openly to clasp hands again with one's friends, was a mighty delight.

At last, with some difficulty, silence was enforced and St.-Aulaire stepped forward and, after having pronounced a quite perfect little speech in the name of France, he offered me *la croix de Guerre* for having been "a brave Queen and an unshakable, loyal and faithful friend, as firm in the hour of disaster as in the hour of success." Such were his words.

This was almost more than I could bear without weeping ; nothing could touch me more than being treated as a soldier who had bravely done his share.

Cheered by an immense crowd, I finally drove off with the King to my house.

The rest of the day, as can well be imagined, was spent receiving people who came to congratulate me and to rejoice.

One of the first who came was Prince Stirbey, and I tried to thank him for his ever-watchful fidelity. But he is too modest, and will never let us thank him. I alone know the arduous task he has had, how through thick and thin he was always there in the hour of need, helping the King to steer through overwhelming difficulties, past dangerous cliffs, never giving way to discouragement, although often brutally attacked and accused of goodness knows what intrigues. He also had the rare moral courage of telling his Sovereigns those things which are often hard to hear, but which helped us to overcome ourselves, to be ready for every sacrifice, living solely in one thought—the good and the honour of our country.

Yes, we owe him a great deal. He is not one of those who stand for popularity, for his quiet, somewhat haughty attitude forbids this ; he will certainly never obtain full recognition, for such is the destiny of those who work for an ideal and not for themselves. But he truly loved his country and its rulers, and served both with fidelity and abnegation. Much of the good which has come to us to-day is thanks to his fidelity. These pages, at least, will testify the truth, and I think that those who have followed my story so far can easily recognize that every word I write is the truth.

To-day events are going so rapidly that I can only note them down as they come, one thing after another, almost hour by hour ; but what the world will presently look like it is difficult to conceive !

I cannot get accustomed to the idea that the Kaiser and his son have abdicated ! They say there is to be a Regency, but for whom, if Germany has declared herself a Republic ? It is all a jumble and I do not like all that is happening, although our national aspirations have been achieved along with all the rest, far beyond our wildest hopes !

Our people are off their heads with delight and enthusiasm. The order for mobilization was received with delirious joy. Truce has been ordered on all the different fronts, but our mobilization continues.

It is difficult to grasp so many events at once. I remain calm amidst all the excitement, hardly daring to let myself give way to any feeling of triumph. For me triumph can be but solemn; we have suffered so much, and even now we are facing such extraordinary, complicated problems. I am very consciously a Sovereign, and I fully realize that our class is going to have a difficult position in this wild rush for democracy. There is also that intimate grief that has come over us which is a heartrending problem, also a cruel humiliation; at least I feel it as such.

Besides, our own triumph is built up upon the crumbling of so much else that I must leave it to others to sing hymns of joy. I humbly thank God for having allowed our time of humiliation and oppression to have such a marvellous end, but it will take time before I can consider myself "the Great Queen" they are so eager to call me.

I received our different generals and we congratulated each other mutually. They all thanked me for "my never-flagging spirit of resistance." I accepted their thanks with a happy feeling that I really had been a good soldier. The meeting with Prezan was emotional; I had been so very unhappy when we last saw each other. Grigorescu is enchanted to be Minister of War. He declared he would have liked to have consulted me before accepting, but I had not been there; he was full of dignified pride.

Sir George Barclay, M. de St.-Aulaire and also M. Vopika came to present themselves, and finally I received all the members of our new Government. It was the first time for months that I was able to smile upon my ministers; I gave them my hand with pleasure and told them so. We chatted with the greatest animation, and more than once I made them laugh. I cannot resist my own little touches of humour, even at my own expense. It is not always quite in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, but it simply bubbles up in me. I finally begged them not to discover suddenly they would prefer a Republic, because that would spoil all

my pleasure. Upon this we all parted in great good-humour, and with many smiles they bowed themselves out of the room.

As a conclusion to this very full day, General Ballard asked if I would come to dine at the British Military Mission, saying that it would mean so much to them if they could have me to-day of all days. I accepted, taking my two elder daughters, General Ballif and a lady-in-waiting with me. It was a happy, cheerful little party full of goodwill and kindly feelings. Colonel Boyle was also there to rejoice with us.

And in this way, this long and too emotional day came to an end!

Jassy, Wednesday, October 31st/November 13th, 1918.

The intense excitement continues. No end of conflicting news from Germany. It seems to be an absolute and complete collapse of the old state of things. It is said that the Kaiser and Crown Prince had fled to Holland and that the Socialists had hoisted the Red Flag upon the palace. I do not know if all this is true, but if so, it is horrible! I keep thinking of Mamma, who must be at Coburg, and of how dreadful all this must be to her. The women of Germany have appealed to the women of France and England not to let them die of starvation. What a fearful state of affairs; what a terrible revenge for all the suffering inflicted upon us and other countries! It seems we shall be able to live the whole winter upon the foodstuffs which they were transporting out of the country, and which have now been stopped. We should have starved this winter had we not been released, but to this they were, of course, quite indifferent. It seems they were rifling absolutely everything. And yet, for all that, I cannot look without grief upon the collapse of a country which for many years I had loved, and in which I was happy, and I cannot but weep with those who suffer because of its terrible downfall. And the German soldiers were so brave! There may be a fearful lesson in this downfall, but one that I would rather read in history than live through.

And the vision of my sad old Mamma, who lost every-

thing in Russia, and must now assist at the collapse of her country of adoption.

There is talk of a triumphant entry of our troops, in company with the Allied troops, into Bucarest. Nando has even proposed that I should ride at his side in uniform. I would never have asked for this, but it is, of course, by far the greatest honour that could be done me, because if ever a queen was one with her army, I was that queen! This I say without any modesty!

Had a sad talk with Prince Stirbey. There are violent attacks on him, and he thinks that he should perhaps resign his position as first dignitary of our household. They hate him because he is Bratianu's brother-in-law. He thinks it might give satisfaction to those who cry for his head.

A strange world! Why should the man who helped to pull us through be attacked? Certainly there are things I shall never be able to understand. When I tell him this he answers sadly: "Of course Your Majesty cannot understand such things, as *you* are always *de bonne foi*." This remark makes me ponder: it is true that I am always of good faith, candid and trustworthy. That is why I am easily taken in, I suppose; being naturally generous, I expect generosity of others.

But I cannot bear the idea of such ingratitude!

Jassy, November 1st/14th, 1918.

Audiences all day long; I am not allowed a moment to breathe. But it is natural that all those who formerly in time of trouble, came to ask my help or sympathy, should to-day come to rejoice and to congratulate me.

I saw Robert de Flers, who has all through been a really good friend to Roumania. We clasped hands with great emotion, and he told me about his exciting flight to Bulgaria and Salonica, whilst we were still cut off from our friends, and how he carried important messages there and back. An exciting flight.

Also Bratianu came to me, of course, for no political considerations separate us now. We met as two friends and fellow-workers, who had occasionally been up against each other, but both of us were conscious that we had done

our share, never allowing events to break the ideal we had so steadfastly clung to all through. Being a strong man, he naturally has many enemies, for the world seldom cares to recognize those who cannot be cut down to an everyday size.

In the afternoon there was a huge meeting of "the Women of Roumania" in the National Theatre. I and my daughters were present. There were many speeches and much cheering, and I had to submit to being much glorified. I accepted all the incense which was being burnt before me as modestly as the occasion justified, and I was proud of our Roumanian women.

A hectic time followed, a description of which is too long to copy down day by day. Events were rushing in so fast that I had much too little time to sit still and grasp all our joy. In grief it is good to have too much to do, it helps one to bear the unbearable, but to-day I would have needed a little leisure so as to be able to go deeply down into my own heart. But the everyday needs of a whole people seemed to be crushing in upon me with a thousand demands, so that I could not call my soul my own, nor my thoughts, nor even my joys and sorrows.

I had for so long been a rallying-point that now that a new era had arisen, I just had to be there for everybody in the hour of victory, as I had been there in the hour of despair: no fatigue must be mine. I was in the centre of the wheel, and had to keep continually turning, no matter if I felt dizzy or not, or if I needed rest.

Though our capital was clamouring for our return, it was delayed because, as a last greeting before leaving, the Germans had blown up all the bridges they could lay hands upon, thereby cutting off our road. Early snowfalls added to the difficulties of transport and reconstruction, so we had to wait patiently till these untimely disasters could be overcome.

Eager as I was to get back to the old home, I had, at the same time, a feeling of reluctance to leave Jassy, become dear because of the days of misfortune, anxiety and effort we had lived within its walls. This town of exile

had now a special meaning for us, and it could not be left without a pang.

And there was also another feeling, a sort of apprehension, almost a fear of going back to the old haunts, knowing that the world was a changed world, and that no recommencement is easy. Those two years had been a lifetime. Nobody's mentality had remained quite the same, nor could life ever again be the same; but although I felt all this subconsciously, I had no idea to what a degree my apprehensions were to prove correct.

Amongst the many who came to see me in those days was Lieutenant Cârja, one of the most terribly wounded officers in my hospital at Bucarest; we had looked after him with tender care, but without much hope of saving him, as he was also a consumptive.

During our worst times of panic he had been evacuated, still very ill, from Jassy to Russia, first to Kief and then to the Ural, because of his lungs. Here the revolution overtook him and he was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, but escaped to Tiflis, where he was admirably treated by the French and English, but these had to abandon the town to the Turks. Cârja fell ill with typhoid, but the Turks behaved humanely, and when he was sufficiently recovered, allowed him to be evacuated to Constantinople, where he by slow degrees worked his way back home.

Most astonishing of all was that in spite of his many vicissitudes he has returned in good health, and his lungs are quite healed!

He was looking very well, clean-shaven, in a neat uniform and trembling with the emotion of seeing me again. He said many loyal things, declaring he owed me his life, and whilst he said this his eyes brimmed over with tears. I could not accept the honour of having saved his life, but I, too, was deeply moved at this unexpected meeting and rejoiced with him over the extraordinary luck which had carried him safely through so many adventures to return a healthy and grateful man.

The chief event during these weeks of waiting was the advent of deputations from Transylvania and Bucovina, come to declare their countries one with old Roumania, the Mother-

land, under whose wing they had always hoped to unite one day.

We received them solemnly and they hailed King Ferdinand and Queen Marie as their deliverers; they came to us as children who needed parents, and we accepted each other with deep emotion, remembering how a short while ago our dream of union had been crushed under the enemy's heel.

The address brought to the King from the Bucovinians ran as follows:

The Congress of Bucovina representing the supreme power of the country to-day, unanimously voted the unconditional and everlasting union of Bucovina, within its historical boundaries, to the Kingdom of Roumania.

We praise the Almighty Providence that, after a long and sorrowful waiting, it was granted us to see the injustice done to our country one hundred and forty-four years ago, made good again. Proud to acclaim Your Majesty our liberator and the bearer of all our troubles, we beg to be shielded under Your Majesty's sceptre. Mending the thread broken for a century and a half, may you renew the glory of Stefan's reign.

The President of the Congress of Bucovina.

IANCU FLONDOR.

Transylvania, Bucovina and even Bessarabia! Greater Roumania! It made me almost giddy to realize the magnanimity of Fate. Certainly our people had gone off to battle, a song on their lips, because they were setting out to fight for the century-old dream, but between times the grief had been so dark that to-day I was almost afraid to accept the light of joy.

There was also this: our attainment meant the downfall, the unhappiness of so many that, being as I am, I could not but shudder at this thought. So much had to fall to pieces before our unity could be accomplished, and I was sensitive enough to be appalled at the decrees of Fate.

We might just as easily have been amongst the vanquished, for had not all nations gone out to battle with the conviction that their cause was sacred, and even if Governments, Kings and Presidents had been mistaken, the fighting man, the soldier, had gone forth in good faith, ready to sacrifice his life for what he was led to consider his duty

towards his country. And *what* sacrifices, *what* slaughter, how many dead! And more tragic, ever so much more tragic are all those graves of the vanquished, than the graves of the victorious. They too had fought bravely, furiously, desperately; but in vain. The thought of all those lives thrown away, only to be beaten in the end, was torture to me; it darkened my hour of triumph.

Kaiser William, when drunk with success, had cried out in a loud voice that King Ferdinand would be the last of the Hohenzollerns to sit on the Roumanian throne. King Ferdinand had said nothing, but he had quietly, humbly pursued his thorny way. To-day, the Kaiser and his son were without a country and King Ferdinand, loyal and modest, was hailed as a deliverer; was the first King of all the Roumanians! How not bow my head in the wonder of what had come to pass?

Friends, who had been torn from us in the hour when we had to be abandoned to our fate, were beginning to arrive, hurrying back to us the moment the frontiers were open; each meeting was like a resurrection.

Then suddenly the 1st of December was fixed for our entry into Bucarest. My faithful friend Colonel Radu Rossetti had arrived with messages from General Berthelot, pressing us to come as soon as possible, for the Allied troops were awaiting us as impatiently as our own people, anxious to give us a tremendous reception. Bridges or no bridges, we must put off our coming no longer! So the final preparations for departure were made and the great day came nearer and nearer.

Before I left I had a last pilgrimage to make; I had to go and say farewell to those from foreign lands, who lay under the ground; those who had died for us, far from their homes.

I asked Cella Delavrancea to go with me, as her father too lies there, that ardent patriot, who had died at the hour of our greatest humiliation, and to-day does not know that his dream and ours has been realized; he is not there to rejoice with us over "România Mare."

So together we went, Cella and I, on that sad November

day. There was no light in the sky, a drizzling rain was falling over half-melted snow, a stifling melancholy lay like a pall over that mournful garden of the dead.

Hand in hand we wandered from grave to grave. Sœur Pucci, my beloved old friend, who had been so cruelly torn from me at the hour when the Allies had to forsake us. Indeed her prayers for us in heaven had not been in vain. Handsome Dr. Campbell, Colonel Dubois, Mlle. de Goutel, Dr. Santoni, and others whose fate it had been to die for us. I remember how we had grieved over each death, be it soldier, doctor or humble nun, and on this day of thaw and sleet, the dead somehow seemed doubly dead.

Only Dr. Clunet was not there; according to his own wish, he had been buried in the garden of Villa Greerul, the hospital where he had so faithfully worked under terrible odds.

The leafless trees wept heavy tears over our heads and close above the ground hung a faint veil of grey mist, out of which the simple wooden cross on Delavrancea's grave rose ghost-like with outstretched arms. We stood before it and words seemed useless; we both knew how much he had loved his country, and he was dead, as was also Nicu Filipescu, that stormy patriot, always in such a hurry, but not destined to see our day of fulfilment, for death takes no heed of human dreams.

And then on Saturday, November 30th, we left and I shall quote again from my diary :

Saturday, 17th/30th November, 1918.

In the train on the way to Bucarest !

We are actually on the way to Bucarest !

Two years ago, exactly at this same date, we were fleeing from our capital—exiles, not knowing whither we were going. Two years, and what years !

How much has been endured, what terrible events, how much suffering, how much despair and hope, like a dwindling light, becoming fainter and fainter ! And yet we hung on desperately, and I for one, never admitted that we were beaten, but only betrayed by Russia's downfall. Luckless and suffering Russia !

And during these two years, what work, what effort; a heartrending series of misfortunes, a situation almost fantastically tragic, with all odds against us.

And yet, in looking back, I cannot but call them great years, when never-ceasing tribulation forced each man to give his best, and if he had nothing to give, then he was simply non-existent. I can even call them blessed years, for they brought me quite close to the heart of my people, they taught me to shun no effort, to fear no danger, to overcome all weakness, and to be ready day and night for every emergency.

Now the long nightmare is over, and the dream of Greater Roumania has become a reality, and we are on our way home!

Nando, whom many doubted, returns as a deliverer, having achieved the unity of his people. The sacrifice he made has been recompensed; to-day his name is blessed by one and all.

Marvellous indeed are the ways of God; great and fearful!

At every station eager crowds, hundreds of soldiers, frantic cheering, music, singing, the waving of many flags, general jubilation.

Braila, in particular, the first of the liberated towns we came back to, was mad with joy. At the station we were nearly torn to pieces by the enchanted crowd.

My heart feels full to overflowing—and to-morrow I shall be able to kneel at Mircea's grave. . . .

Cotroceni, Sunday, November 18th/December 1st, 1918.

We are back! Actually back again in the old home after two years' exile, and dare I utter the great word—we have returned triumphant.

I do not say this in a spirit of pride, but humbly as one who desires to fall on her knees and render thanks.

How even try to describe the day of emotion which lies behind us? Adjectives sound so hollow when one tries to put it all down on paper; it was a day of wild, delirious enthusiasm.

In spite of transport difficulties and the destruction the

enemy had left in his wake, everything went without a hitch; even the weather behaved, but torrential rain had made havoc of the worn-out roads. Our train, however, arrived almost according to schedule. I confess that I was feeling tremendously excited, and my fingers trembled as I fastened the buttons of my military tunic, which with its leather belt had been made for the occasion. As head-dress I wore a grey astrakhan bonnet with a strap under my chin, which gave me the look of a healthy, chubby youth. This get-up was completed by a long military mantle with a fur collar. I give all these details because one day it may be amusing to remember how I was dressed.

We were met at the station of Mogosioia by our portly friend, General Berthelot, and by several English and French officers, and, of course, also our generals, headed by Prezan; Radu Rossetti was also there with a beaming smile on his kindly face. It can well be imagined with what deep emotion we greeted each other. Our horses awaited us at the station. I was to ride huge and solid Jumbo, a very tower of strength and not to be perturbed by any sort of excitement, a wise and steadfast animal, just what I needed for this day of noisy manifestations.

Carol had already ridden into town at the head of his regiment, and our daughters had gone on before us in a carriage drawn by four horses.

We were the last to start, the King and I, with Nicky on one side, and General Berthelot on the other, followed by many generals and all our A.D.C.s. And thus we rode solemnly down the well-known "Chaussée," which was lined by many troops. First the French and British, and then our own, headed by my regiment, the 4th Roşiori.

It was the first time that we saw Allied troops on our soil, and the joy of having them with us to-day was almost more than I could bear: I felt as though my heart must burst. Friends at last! We had been so hopelessly cut off in our far corner of the world; during the whole war we had never been in touch with friendly armies except the Russians, and they, alas, at the end turned into a terror instead of a reassurance.

Half-way we were stopped by a circle of priests in bright

vestments, come to bless our return, and also the Roumanian and Allied flags. Solemn chants were sung, and we were given the cross to kiss.

A second stop was made on the square before the *Calea Victoriei*, and here we were received by the mayor with the traditional bread and salt, by our Government and many former ministers of all parties, and also by the Corps Diplomatique and numerous enthusiastic ladies, who showered flowers on me, none too easy to cope with on horseback.

After this followed our entry into town, down the celebrated *Calea Victoriei*, dear to Roumanian hearts: the King, I, Nicky and Berthelot in a line heading our troops, closely followed by those of our Allies. It was indeed a triumphant march back into our capital.

The town had gone absolutely mad. It was as though the houses as well as the pavement were cheering with the crowd. Flags everywhere, undulating from the windows, from the house-tops, from the lamp-posts, flags in the hands of every child. It was a giddy waving of red, yellow and blue.

High-perched on Jumbo's solid back, I could look over the heads of the multitude, right into the windows of the houses, and keen-eyed as I am, I could catch the expression of every face, answer every smile, notice the excitement of each child, be in intimate communion with the people's joy.

All faces were turned towards us, and those thousands and thousands of outstretched hands seemed to be taking re-possession of the Sovereigns from whom they had been parted for two bitter years.

Bucarest had known every horror of occupation under the sway of ruthless masters, who had heavily oppressed and tyrannized over the population. No man's soul had been his own; pale-faced, with bowed heads, our people had had to submit to their fate. No voice had dared speak above a whisper, no man had been able to go freely about his business except those who had kowtowed to the enemy; the faithful had had a bad time.

And now, after these cruel two years, in spite of misfortune and humiliation, we had come back victorious, and

Roumania's age-long dream was fulfilled. No wonder that our people were frantic with joy, no wonder that even the stones under our feet seemed to acclaim us, to glory in our return.

And looking down upon all those upturned faces, it was as though I could read the past suffering in every eye.

Our procession wound its way to the classical square, where the statue of Michael the Brave stands brandishing his sword in his left hand.

Here, ever since I had come to the country in 1893, an innocent and homesick bride, I had witnessed our yearly parade ; but never a parade such as this one, in which the French and British troops took part, and it was with frantic cheers of exultation that our population acclaimed our deliverers, who had come from over the Danube, having travelled from afar so as to be with us on this day of days.

The parade was followed by a thanksgiving service at the Metropolitan church. Whilst the guests were arriving, I was given ten minutes in which to change from uniform into festive attire.

The Te Deum was short, solemn, impressive ; the dusky church lighted by a thousand candles, and whilst we knelt, rendering thanks unto God, a chorus of many voices swelled in waves above our heads.

As we stepped out of the church, General Grigorescu came forward in the name of the army, begging the King to accept the Field-Marshal's staff. I had suggested this idea to the generals, who had adopted it with enthusiasm, but to Nando it came as a surprise and he was deeply touched.

And then we drove home, home to our house, to Cotroceni, where Mircea had lain for two lonely years awaiting our return, Mircea, my youngest, whom I had had to forsake !

So still it was in the dear, dim church : I knelt down and buried my face in my hands.

"Mircea, I have come back !"

But Mircea was dead ; neither joy nor pain could move him any more ; Mircea was dead.

All the world over there are so many dead, so many brave boys in every land, who to-day cannot rejoice over the hour of victory, nor weep over the hour of defeat. . . .

“Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. . . .”

And here I let the pen drop from my fingers. It is not the end of my story, for it is only fairy tales which end in being “happy ever after”—only fairy tales; and this is no fairy tale, but the story of my life.

What came afterwards is long, very long and interesting no doubt, but all the same this book had better end here, where I have come back to Mircea’s grave, back to the old home.

One day, perhaps, I shall write “what came after”—this remains to be seen, but to-day, somehow, I am moved to finish with words not my own, the words of one who knew all about the sorrows of kings:

“This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

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Index

A

- Adjud, 223, 241-2, 245; author at, 78-9
 Adrianople, 422
 Albania, 186, 419
 Albu, Madame, 231
 Alexandra, Empress of Russia, 35, 95; Russian hatred for, 117, 129, 131; bad influence of, 118; present for author from, 147; and Russian revolution, 151-2
 Alexieff, General, 152
 Alexis, Grand Duke, of Russia, 141, 146
 Allies, the, and Roumania, 8, 10, 28-9, 49, 53, 56, 65, 277, 294, 328, 348-9, 430-1; author and, 25, 38, 318, 355, 364, 429; convention with, 52; and Danube, 57, 422, 431; victories of, 400, 402, 411, 423; and Bulgaria, 416
 Anderson, Colonel, 250, 252-3, 302, 308, 313; author and, 250, 256, 275, 284, 290, 329; visits hospitals, 254; and Russian offer of help, 261; and Zigane music, 321, 324; sympathy of, 337; takes leave of author, 338, 340, 343; leaves Red Cross provisions, 347
 Andrews, Mr., 162
 Anet, Claude, 193
 Angelescu, General, 206
 Anica, Mother, 381, 386, 408
 Antonescu, Madame, 183-4, 393
 Antonescu, Victor, 327, 423

- Arad, 28
 Arges, 231
 Arion, Costica, 355, 418
 Arion, Virgil, 328
 Armstrong, Dr., 199, 298
 Austria, and Roumania, 26; and Bucovina, 29; Roumania at war against, 49; Carol and, 53; and peace, 425, 428; downfall of, 426-7; and Germany, 429
 Austria-Hungary, 10, 332; and Roumania, 28; dismemberment of, 33; Roumanian National Party of, 258
 Averescu, General, 128, 177-8, 227, 236, 247, 267, 332, 429; army of, beaten back, 217; Ballif and, 229-30; author and, 231-5, 237, 240, 242, 268, 300-1, 308, 326, 331, 336, 389; sanatorium organized by, 255; at Council of Ministers, 291; asked to form Government, 318-19; and new Cabinet, 320; treats for peace, 328; and Austrian Emperor, 333; resignation of, 347
 Averescu, Madame, 128, 173, 177; author and, 232

B

- Baba Elisaveta, 381, 408
 Bacau, 178, 231-2, 332; author at, 77, 128, 177; doctors at, 233
 Baden, Max of, 417
 Bădescu, Colonel, 262

- Baker, Mr., 167, 214, 228, 308, 313 ;
author and, 284, 295 ; author
decorates, 338
- Balanescu, Rossetti, 271
- Ballard, General, 216, 302, 312, 395,
397 ; takes leave of author,
338
- Ballif, General, 52, 83, 137, 159,
199-200, 202, 323, 337, 349,
380, 401, 411, 416 ; as A.D.C.,
22 ; and author's hospital, 55,
101 ; severity of, 60, 135, 157 ;
brings bad news, 63 ; advises
author, 68, 98, 157, 349, 351 ;
and Mircea's illness, 71 ; and
tour through Moldavia, 77 ;
accompanies author, 81-2, 104,
110, 131, 163-4, 168-9, 176,
183, 185, 234-5, 245, 247, 272,
284, 307, 371-2, 435 ; at
Câmpu-Lung, 83 ; and flight
from Buftea, 86 ; at Jassy, 90-
91, 93 ; talks with, 99-100,
111 ; illness of, 117, 190-1 ;
at Zorleni, 122 ; refuses to
leave author, 146 ; and Ros-
setti, 182 ; pessimism of, 205 ;
and Russian retreat, 207-8 ;
leaves for front, 218 ; visits
hospitals, 220, 223 ; and Aver-
escu, 227, 229 ; at Cotăfănești,
238 ; Nicolas and, 246 ; and
canteens for children, 251, 253,
265, 279 ; and author's Christ-
mas calendar, 258 ; visits first
line trenches with author, 262 ;
and news from Russia, 267-8 ;
visits General Moșoiu, 269 ;
decorated by Berthelot, 329 ;
author decorates, 346 ; Ger-
mans and, 367 ; helps author
on rough path, 406-7 ; and
Mos Cerbu, 421 ; and open-
ing of Dardanelles, 426
- Balș, Georges, 293, 313
- Balș, Mariette, 323, 393
- Banat, *see* Temesvar, Banat of
- Barca, Colonel, 307
- Barclay, Lady, 81, 132, 167
- Barclay, Sir George, 281, 302, 352,
434 ; and message from
British Government, 303 ; and
author, 326, 435 ; and Coanda
Government, 428
- Barlăd, 104, 122, 125, 323, 350 ;
hospitals at, 97 ; Ferdinand at,
109
- Bârnova, 119
- Barrett, Captain, 348
- Barter, General, 207, 259
- Basarabescu, General, 208
- Bavaria, 429
- Beaumont, Marquis de, 103, 247
- Beldiman, 328
- Belgium, Roumania as ally of, 50 ;
German invasion of, 53 ;
Allied advance in, 415
- Belgrade, 28
- Belloy, Lala de, 112, 147, 212, 313
- Benedictus XV, Pope, 82
- Berthelot, General, 308 ; author
and, 67-8, 70, 97, 161, 231 ;
and military situation, 70 ;
decorates Ballif, 329 ; takes
leave of author, 338, 340, 343 ;
in France, 397 ; and return of
author to Bucarest, 440, 443-4
- Bessarabia, 29, 203, 352, 386-7 ;
good news from, 314 ; Rou-
mania and, 317 ; Roumanian
troops in, 327 ; Austrians in,
333 ; united to Roumania,
361-3, 439
- Bibesco, George Valentin, 44
- Bibesco, Marthe, 44, 85, 193
- Bicaz, 390, 392, 421, 431 ; Carol at,
393 ; author at, 395, 401-2,
419, 427-8
- Bird, Mr., 281
- Bistrița valley, 231, 390, 393, 420
- Blondel, M., 212, 322
- Blondel, Madame, 212
- Bogdan, Dr., 163
- Bogdan, Madame, 256
- Bogdana, 379
- Bonachi, Dr., 220

- Bonné, Madame, 185-6
 Borgo, 227
 Boris, King of Bulgaria, 417
 Boștea Galea, 380, 408
 Botoșani, 159, 167, 208, 279;
 aviation field at, 280
 Boyle, Colonel Joe ("Uncle Joe"),
 334, 339, 341, 370, 382, 416,
 419, 435; and author, 344, 367,
 418; saves Roumanian depu-
 ties, 368-9; and Requiem for
 soldiers, 373; at Cotăfănești,
 379; Ileana and, 379, 398,
 401-2, 430; illness of, 386;
 convalescence of, 395-7; and
 peasants, 399-400; and Em-
 press Marie of Russia, 427
 Braila, 108, 442
 Brancovan, Collette, 147
 Brandenstein, Oberst von, 375-6
 Brașov, 63
 Brătești, 200
 Bratianu, Ion, 30, 85, 171, 210, 314,
 429; and author, 25, 95-6,
 106, 150, 436; and author's
 letters to George V, 27; letter
 from, to author, 38, 40-3; and
 King's birthday, 48; and mili-
 tary situation, 69; at Head-
 quarters, 98; and Coalition
 Government, 108; opposes
 author's visit to Tsar, 116;
 visits Russia, 118-20, 123,
 183; party against, 147; and
 Grand Duchess Kyrill, 187; and
 author's silver wedding, 312;
 resignation of, 317-18, 328;
 Government wish to arrest,
 403
 Bratianu, Madame Vintila, 302
 Bratianu, Vintila, 105, 125, 171,
 183
 Bucarest, 81, 179, 189, 230, 329,
 347, 349, 367, 388; Carol's
 lying in state at, 15; hospital
 in palace at, 55; Bulgarians
 march towards, 85; refugees
 from, 91; fall of, 92, 184, 208,
 211; author's article on, 271;
 message to author from ladies
 of, 302-3; envoys sent to,
 328; and advance of Allies,
 423; triumphant entry into,
 436, 440-5; occupation of,
 444
 Buchanan, Sir George, 259
 Bucovina, 28-9, 160; Russia and
 Roumania's claim to, 33;
 Roumanian troops in, 429;
 union of, with Roumania, 438-
 439
 Budapest, 404-5, 409
 Buftea, 59, 74, 76, 79; author at,
 43, 55, 65; and author's birth-
 day, 75; air-raids at, 81, 84;
 flight from, 89
 Bulgaras, 88
 Bulgaria, 436; and Roumania, 26,
 37, 56, 332; and Russia, 31;
 and England, 38; and Ger-
 many, 50; results of defeat of,
 57; accepts peace conditions,
 416
 Burdujeni, 160
 Busche, Herr von dem, 9, 11;
 writes to author, 39
- C
- Caiuți, 223, 240-1
 Camarașescu, Madame, 212
 Camarașescu, Yvonne, 322
 Cambrai, fall of, 416
 Campbell, Dr., 198-9, 441
 Campina, 95
 Câmpu-Lung, 83, 95
 Câmpurile, 271
 Candole, General, 213
 Cantacuzène, Alexandrine, 44-5, 59
 Cantacuzène, Alice, 182, 333
 Cantacuzène, Constance, 323; her
 hospital, 99, 109; awarded
 Cross, 216
 Cantacuzène, Didine, 329, 388
 Cantacuzène, Jean, Dr., 135, 168,
 245, 308; and sanitary organi-
 zation, 131, 133; and condi-

- Cantacuzène, Jean, Dr. (*cont.*):
 tion of hospitals, 132, 156; and
 Regina Maria ambulances, 261
- Cantacuzène, Maruka, 78, 199, 212,
 252, 297, 312; author and, 75,
 288; and plan for author to
 visit Tsar, 112; and con-
 valescents, 215; author at
 house of, 314
- Cantacuzène, Michel, 108; author
 and, 309, 318
- Caragea, Prince, 256
- Cârja, Lieutenant, 438
- Carmen Sylva, *see* Elisabeth, Queen
- Carol, King of Roumania, 69, 189,
 311; death of, 12, 18, 26;
 tomb of, 13; funeral of, 15-
 16; and Carmen Sylva, 19;
 and "Conseil de la Cour-
 onne," 52; and war, 53; and
 Kaiser, 249; requiem for, 418
- Carol, Prince of Roumania, 80, 96,
 147, 159, 207-8, 219, 226, 253,
 274, 315, 339, 341, 360; and
 Carmen Sylva, 20; at Scro-
 viste Peris, 55; and Mircea's
 illness, 71-2; goes to front,
 87, 186, 205, 218; retreats
 into Moldavia, 92; at Head-
 quarters, 100, 105; visits
 Russia, 118-20, 123; project
 of marriage of, 123, 137;
 works for author, 141-2, 145-
 146, 157; visits regiment,
 148; visits hospitals, 187-8,
 220; and Albert Thomas,
 192; drives author, 203, 279,
 281; at the front, 212, 230;
 returns from front, 215, 236;
 inspects battlefield, 221; and
 General Grigorescu, 223; and
 Averescu, 237; indisposition
 of, 243-4, 246; and peace
 with Germany, 276-7; and
 Jorga, 292; and decorations
 for doctors, 306; and Crown
 Council, 335-7; and death of
 Sister Pucci, 34-5; commands
 regiment, 393; character of,
 405-6; and Hungarian, 409-
 410; and return to Budapest, 443
- Carp, Peter, 184; and Central
 Powers, 8; favours Germany,
 50, 53; treason of, 303; votes
 for German dynasty, 328;
 author and, 329
- Caşin, convent of, 179, 258, 361
- Catargi, Henry, 171
- Catargi, Lili, 385, 395, 412; 426
- Catargi, Madame Henri, 59
- Central Powers, 57; Roumania
 and, 8, 10
- Cerbu, Mos, 419-22
- Cerişoia, 357
- Cernowitz, 29, 207, 209, Russian
 failure near, 243
- Cetaţuia, 215
- Championère, Dr., 249
- Chiroin, 432
- Chitila, 66
- Chrissoveloni, Jean, 99, 219; and
 Regina Maria organizations,
 134, 178, 388; and plans for
 evacuation, 214; visits hos-
 pitals, 223; builds author's
 house, 224-5; author and, 241
- Chrissoveloni, Nicky, 99
- Chrissoveloni, Sybil, 97, 221, 224,
 226, 322, 324; hospital of, 98,
 218-19; character of, 99;
 visits hospitals, 220, 223; and
 author's house, 225
- Ciachleu, Mt., 396, 420
- Cincu, Madame Constance, 22, 282
- Ciocanesti, 44-5, 59
- Clegea, 359
- Clemenceau, Georges, 424
- Clunet, Dr., 147, 167, 441; author
 and, 93; illness of, 160; death
 of, 162-3
- Clunet, Madame, 166
- Coanda, General, 428, 432
- Coanda, Madame, 207, 312, 393
- Coburg, 23, 388, 435
- Coltea, hospital, 61
- Comanesti, 78, 356-7

"Conseil de la Couronne," 52

Constantinescu, Alecco, 118, 125;
and families of soldiers, 23;
character of, 24; at Cotofănești,
264; author and, 281-2;
and Ferdinand, 286

Constantinople, 174, 438; Prince
Ernie Hohenlohe at, 22; and
Russia, 53; fall of, 57, 423;
Allies march on, 422

Constantza, 69-70

Copaceni, 46

Copou, 168

Costachi, Lupu, 328

Costescu, 142, 146, 372

Costinescu, Dr., 360, 393

Costinescu, Madame, 360, 393

Cotescu, General, 84

Cotofănești, 223-4, 232, 241, 257,
272, 284, 286, 381, 394, 428;
author's house at, 237-9, 358,
369-71, 377, 385; author
leaves, 249, 387; author at,
262, 264, 380, 384-6, 408;
cemetery at, 269

Cotroceni, 48, 91, 161, 259, 374;
author at, 23; General Arthur
Paget at, 25; as military
centre, 55; hospital at, 57-9;
air raids at, 60-2; burial of
Mircea at, 76; author parts
from, 88; Mos Cerbu at, 421;
author's return to, 445

Crăinicianu, 138

Craiova, 85

Crimea, the, 151, 390, 427

Crown Prince of Germany, 143,
431, 435

Curtea de Arges, 84; Carmen
Sylva at, 13; bishop of, 14;
funeral of Carmen Sylva at, 15,
16; orphanage at, 19; funeral
of King Carol at, 15; Kaiser
at, 249

Cuza, 128, 199

Czernin, Otto, 9

Czernin, Count Ottokar, 9-11,
332-3

D

Danube, the, 46, 57, 73, 113, 445;
Roumania's frontiers along,
28; as natural barrier, 29;
bridge over, 69; Allies on,
422-3; Allies cross, 431
Dardanelles, Roumania and, 27;
defence of, 28; attempt to
force, 37 n.; and Russia, 53;
surrender of Turks at, 425

Decies, Lady, 254

Dedeașaci, 422

Delavrancea, Barbu, 330, 337, 383,
441

Delavrancea, Cella, 241, 244, 246,
264, 290; at Cotofănești, 383;
with author, at cemetery, 440

Deleni, 250

Denize, Mr., 67; and Mircea's ill-
ness, 71-2; with author, on
train, 90, 92; and illness of
Nicolas, 279

Devaux, Dr., 249

Diamandi, 158, 187; Grand
Duchess Kyrill and, 259; sent
from Petrograd, 315

Dniester, River, 29-30

Dobrușea, 57, 69, 83

Don, River, 213

Dorohoi, 254, 280

Dragalina, General, 74

Dubois, Colonel, 441

Duca, Jean, 246, 365

Ducky, *see* Kyrill, Grand Duchess

Duhonin, General, 289

Dumbrăveni, 159-60

Dumeni, 280

Dumétru, 381-2

Durau, 401

E

Edinburgh, Duchess of, 4, 428;
in Germany, 22; and author's
childhood, 30; and author,
107, 216, 388; and collapse
of Germany, 435

- Ekaterinoslav, 110
- Elisabeth, Queen of Roumania (Carmen Sylva), 53, 64, 69, 189, 231; death of, 12, 14-15; widowhood of, 12; burial of, 15; character of, 16-17; memories of, 18 *et seq.*; and Elisabetta, 20-1; her belief in Germany, 49; Kaiser and, 249
- Elisabetta, Princess of Roumania, 80, 119, 121, 199, 206, 232, 275, 283, 370-1, 396; and Carmen Sylva, 14, 20-1; and Mircea's illness, 71; distributes provisions, 150, 153; at Botoșani, 208; at Russian hospital, 217; and author, 230; injury to knee of, 233, 235; indisposition of, 236, 238, 242, 244, 269, 424; at Stânca, 251; at Cotofănești, 262; at Roman, 283-4; at Villa Greerul, 285; and children's canteen, 292; and Cella, 384
- Elise, 303
- Ellis, Dr., 264-7, 349
- Eltscherninoff, General, 238, 245
- Enescu, Fotin, 428
- Enescu, Georges, 15; as musician, 252, 297, 304, 314, 341-2
- England, author's belief in, 8, 11, 30; and Roumania, 27, 28, 50, 56-7, 237, 303, 338; and Bulgaria, 38; entry of, into war, 53; games from, 191; author welcome in, 285; Roumanian Red Cross in, 293; Hungary and, 410
- Entente, Triple, 60, 306; author's confidence in, 31; Bulgaria and, 37 *n.*, 56; Roumania and, 49, 403; mistakes of, 320; luck on side of, 397
- F
- Fasciotti, Signor, 104, 330
- Ferdinand, King of Bulgaria, 37, 417
- Ferdinand, King of Roumania (Nando), 5-6, 36; and Liberals, 4; his dependence on author, 5-6, 8, 10, 25, 28; and foreign politics, 7-8; and Carmen Sylva, 12, 19; and Prince Ernie Hohenlohe, 23; and German Emperor, 25, 440; and the war, 27, 43, 66-7; attempts to stir up feeling against, 31, 39; drives with author, 45-7, 210, 358, 390, 396; birthday of, 48, 230; and entry of Roumania into war, 49 *et seq.*, 56; and his ministers, 52-4, 319; popularity of, 55, 190, 287; at Cotroceni, 57; and author's letter to Tsar, 65; and military situation, 69, 115, 205-6; and Mircea's illness, 71-2; retreats into Moldavia, 92; at Head-quarters, 96-7, 99; talks with author, 98, 142, 422-3; and opening of Parliament, 104, 108; and Grand Duchess Kyrill, 109; and plan for author to visit Tsar, 116; at Jassy, 118, 128, 131, 147; at Zorleni, 122; decorates troops, 127, 189, 359; and suspected treachery of Sturdza, 138; suggested visit to Russia, 148; and Tsar's abdication, 153; at Villa Greerul, 160; and agrarian question, 163, 166, 180; at front, 167; and Gutchkoff, 171; Russian soldiers and, 181; and Jews, 185; returns from front, 194, 229; and coalition government, 197; and Transylvanian troops, 198; decorates Dr. Campbell, 199; decorates Madame Camarășescu, 212; holds war council, 215; and

Ferdinand, King of Roumania

(cont.):

change of command, 217; and Averescu, 237, 242; visits hospital, 242, 244, 247; and Russian situation, 254, 274-5; and Professor Masaryk, 258; and author's birthday, 260, 424-5; and peace with Germany, 276-7; and plan to leave Jassy, 286; and plan to leave Roumania, 290, 301; and parting with children, 295; decorates Ragosa, 298; and Tcherbacheff, 300; and Bolsheviks, 301-2; decorates officers, 304; and author's fairy tale, 305; Russian plot to kill, 306; silver wedding of, 310-12; sends telegram to George V, 315; and new Government, 318-19; Entente and, 320; promotes Grigorescu, 321; and Germanophiles, 328; and Czernin, 332-3; and peace conditions, 332-7; and Crown Council, 334-7; author has painful scene with, 335; author and Carol try to persuade, 339-40; says good-bye to French Mission, 344; and Marghiloman Government, 351, 391-2, 401-3, 410-11; and Bessarabians, 362; allows author to leave Jassy, 369, 377; disagrees with author, 369, 391; and generals, 397; and author's visit to battlefields, 405; and family tragedy, 414-16; and Costica Arion, 418; proclaims universal suffrage, 429; receives author at Jassy, 432-3; returns to Bucarest, 436, 443-5; Bucovina's address to, 439; and unity of Roumania, 442

Ferigo, Colonel, 98

Ferikidy, 106, 194

Ferreylles, Dr., 200-2, 255; at Galata hospital, 283

Fifield, Miss, 251, 315

Filipescu, Nicu, 39, 43, 441

Finland, 227, 319, 332

Fitzwilliam, Dr., 173, 284; takes leave of author, 298

Flers, Robert de, 186, 237, 424, 436

Flondor, Iancu, 439

Florescu, Mlle., 424

Focşani, 215-16, 218, 293

Fournier, Admiral, 86; author and, 96, 104

France, and Russian promises, 27; Roumania as ally of, 50; German advance into, 53; Roumanians and, 192; English success in, 281; honours author, 327, 432

Franz Ferdinand, Archduke, 9

Frumoasa, 132, 206

Fuller, Loc, 183

G

Galata, 165, 213, 283

Galatz, 108, 246, 283

Gavanescu, General, 258

George V, King of England, and author, 25; author writes to, 26-30, 56-7, 348; sends wire to author, 285, 349, 352, 425; sends wire to Ferdinand, 314; Ferdinand wires to, 315; writes to author, 422

George, David Lloyd, 314

Georgescu, General, 56

Georgescu, Major, 167, 195, 228, 292, 372; and Mircea's illness, 72; and flight from Buftea, 90; at Jassy, 93; and can- teens for children, 253, 279

Germany, author's ties to, 7; and Italy, 25; and Roumania, 26, 27, 28, 50, 332; Roumanian party in favour of, 50; King Carol and, 53; offensive of, in Roumania, 60; danger of

Germany (*cont.*) :

invasion by, 63; and submarines, 135; America declares war on, 167; and Bolshevik Russia, 289; breaks off armistice, 315-16; sends ultimatum, 317; and Ukrainian corn, 325; Austria and, 425; abandoned by allies, 429; defeat of, 430; declared a Republic, 433; Kaiser flies from, 435

Gerota Sanatorium, 57

Ghidigeni, 197, 207, 209, 219, 246, 286, 302; author at, 218, 221, 322-3; Mignon at, 230, 244

Ghyca, Prince Leon, 160, 197, 250

Ghyca, Princess, 250

Giurgevo, 46

Glynn, Captain Carr, 25-6

Goodsell, Mr., 216

Goutel, Mlle. de, 441

Grajduri, 90, 206

Grecianu, Demètre, 106, 108, 125

Grecianu, Elise, 160

Grecianu, Madame Demètre, 251

Grecianu, Madame Lucie, 168

Grecianu, Pierre, 160

Green, nurse, 189

Griffith, Evans, 298

Grigorescu, General, 178, 223, 300, 378; and Russian troops, 219; author and, 221, 226, 304, 320-325, 330, 350; at Council of Ministers, 291; Ferdinand decorates, 312; promotion of, 321; as Minister of War, 428, 434; and Ferdinand, 445

Grosetti, 360

Gutchkoff, 171-2

H

Hansen, Dr., 29

Hantesti, 159

Herling, 314

Hohenlohe, Prince Ernie, 22-3

Horez, 82

Hornesti, 168-9

Humber, Dr., 170, 187

Hungary, and Roumania, 26, 28; returned prisoners from, 360; and England, 409-10; Ferdinand of Bulgaria in, 417; declares Republic, 428

I

Ileana, Princess, 85, 106, 197, 211, 370, 390; and Mircea, 23; at author's hospital, 64-5; author and, 67, 136, 296; at Jassy, 93; illness of, 124, 137; and the poor, 142, 419, 430; pony of, 146, 158; at Ghidigeni, 207; pets of, 209, 237; charm of, 227-8; at Deleni, 250-1; and author's birthday, 260; an earnest pupil, 275; at English Legation, 303; and Christmas Day, 304; author writes story for, 305; birthday of, 308; at English Mission, 339; and Colonel Boyle, 379, 398, 401-402; and peasants, 380, 383-384, 399-400; at Cotăfănești, 385-6

Ionescu, Také, 108, 116, 125

Italy, 314; neutrality of, 25; and Roumania, 26, 50; alarming news from, 265

J

Jancovescu, General, 210, 259

Jassy, author at, 77, 92-3, 109, 122-123, 229, 236, 249, 256, 268, 290, 317, 388, 426, 432, 437; author's flight to, 90; service in church at, 105; railway from, 110; condition of hospitals at, 123-5; Head-quarters at, 128-9; wood-cutting near, 131; degradation of general in, 139-40; misery in, 148, 159, 168; poor of, 155, 168, 307; danger of infection in,

Jassy (*cont.*):

156; Jews in, 197; country round, 203; author leaves, 237, 369, 377, 392; epidemic of jaundice at, 242, 244; Carol leaves for, 246, 411, 423; author's birthday at, 260; Russian troops marching against, 301; plot to kill Ferdinand in, 306; distribution of bread in, 307; Ukrainians in, 327; author's dislike of, 370, 372, 377; demobilization in, 375; Requiem for King Carol in, 418; French aviator at, 422

Jijia, River, 203

Joan, 218

Jorga, Professor, 120, 167, 182, 293, 337; author and, 103, 187; and news of armistice, 292; New Year wishes of, 313-14

K

Keller, General, 134

Kerensky, 181, 259; as "Generalissimo," 239; and Korniloff, 246; flight of, 267

Kharkov, 110

Kherson, 118, 129

Kief, 289, 438

Kirilianu, 258

Kishinev, 314, 362

Kopkov, Madame, 93, 303, 370

Korff, Baron von, 39

Korniloff, failure of, 239; Kerensky and, 246; escape of, 289

Kropotkin, Prince, 166, 308; and author, 209; at Adjud, 242

Krylenko, sub-lieutenant, 289

Kühlmann, 314

Kyryll, Grand Duchess, of Russia (Ducky), 22, 95, 107, 123, 158, 161, 166, 213, 216, 283, 294, 428; author writes to, 31, 36, 186; writes to author, 36,

227; in Roumania, 107-12, 130, 206; and plan for author to visit Tsar, 116-18; and revolution in Russia, 150, 186-187; and Empress Alexandra, 152; helps Major Georgescu, 167; in Finland, 227, 319, 332; Sir George Buchanan and, 259; and Bolsheviks, 388

Kyryll, Grand Duke, 158

L

Lahovary, Simone (Simky), 22, 52, 97, 99, 113, 161, 179, 339, 426; and author, 101, 139; illness of, 142; in Persia, 193

Lascar, 266

Laurier, Dr. le, 160, 224, 246; verses composed by, 264

Laycock, Captain, 293-4, 306

Lecinsky, General, 128

Lenin, 286, 306, 327

Leonté, Dr., 79, 199

Lille, 424

Locker - Lampson, Commander, 237, 250

Löwenfeld, Baron von, 39

Lupu, Lieutenant Georges, 270

Luynes, Duc de, 216, 237

M

Macedon, Ioan, 372

Macedonia, 415

MacGregor, Miss, 298

Mackensen, 374-5

Macsut, 251

Maioresco, 53

Mamulea, Dr., 157, 196-7, 313, 347; works with author, 281; and Red Cross, 293; and feeding poor, 393; illness of, 419

Mărășești, battle of, 204, 218, 222, 258, 428; ambulances at, 225; enemy attacks weaken at, 229; author at, 321

- Marghiloman, 203; advocates neutrality, 53; forms cabinet, 347, 351; and author, 353, 362-3, 404-5, 415-16; and Ferdinand, 391, 402-3, 411; Ileana and, 400; and Germans, 401; fall of, 428
- Mărginianu, General, 271-2, 378
- Maria, 381, 386, 408
- Marie, Dowager Empress of Russia, 95; hospital train organized by, 92; in Crimea, 390; plans to rescue, 427
- Marie, Princess, of Roumania (Mignon), 104-5, 162, 190, 195, 198-9, 330, 350-1, 396, 427; and Carmen Sylva, 20-21; character of, 23; and Mircea's illness, 71; her work at hospitals, 119, 142, 197, 209, 218-20, 241; visits regiment, 148-9; at Ghidigeni, 207, 226, 230; visits battlefields, 221, 405-7; illness of, 243, 257, 261, 275, 370; and Sœur Pucci, 285; birthday of, 310; her name day, 409; rides with author, 412-13
- Marie, Queen of Roumania, and Roumania, 3; diary of, 4, 48 *et seq.*, 55; Ferdinand's dependence on, 5-6, 8, 10, 25, 38; character of, 5-7, 121; and Germany, 7; her dislike of neutrality, 24-5; writes to George V, 26-30, 56-7, 348; writes to Grand Duchess Vladimir, 30-1; writes to Grand Duchess Kyrill, 31, 36; Nicolas's letter to, 32-5; letter from British Military Attaché in Sofia to, 37; letter from Bratianu to, 38, 40-3; becomes owner of Copaceni, 46; and entry of Roumania into War, 48 *et seq.*; and her hospital, 55, 64, 74, 80, 85, 87-8, 92, 101; visits hospitals, 57-9, 118, 163, 165, 169, 173, 175, 177-8, 183-4, 187-8, 196, 198, 201, 206, 218, 220-1, 223, 228, 233, 239-41, 243-5, 255-6, 284, 322-4; and air raids, 60-62, 81-2; writes to Tsar, 65-66, 111; and illness of Mircea, 69-76; birthday of, 73, 75, 259-60, 424-5; and her regiment, 73, 113, 247; and death of Mircea, 76, 80, 260-1, 446; and Russian soldiers, 77-8, 144, 175-6, 217, 265-6; tours Moldavia, 77-9; receives bad news, 82, 85-6, 94, 115, 267-8, 325; at Câmpulung, 83-4; and flight from Buftea, 86 *et seq.*; parts from Cotroceni, 88; her life on a train, 90-2; and Russian hospital train, 92-3, 124-5; at Headquarters, 96-8, 100; prayer of, 101-2; audiences of, 103-4, 256, 282-3, 374-5, 409-10, 436; and Nicolas's name day, 106; and coalition government, 108; plans to visit Tsar, 112-13, 116-18, 137-8; and situation of hospitals, 123-5, 132-3, 156; and troops, 127-8, 148-9, 157, 159-60, 168, 195-6, 206, 235-236, 353, 356; and sanitary organization, 131, 133, 156; and "Regina Maria" organization, 134, 135, 175, 178, 188; illness of, 134, 138-43, 182-3, 257-8; and degradation of General S——, 139-40; and Russian revolution, 150-3; and poor of Jassy, 155, 168, 307; and illness of Dr. Clunet, 161, 162-3; visits Colonel Rossetti, 164; and Roumania's National Day, 189; and Transylvanian troops, 197-8, 211, 265-6; and news of Russian retreat, 206-7, 210,

Marie, Queen of Roumania (*cont.*):

- 219; and plans for evacuation, 213-16; leaves for front, 218; inspects battlefields, 221, 234-235, 357-60, 406-8; and her house at Cotořăneste, 224-5, 237-9, 243, 268-9, 358, 369-371, 377, 408-9; at orphan's home, 229, 282; decorates chasseurs, 235; and American Red Cross, 250, 252, 257; and canteens for children, 251, 253, 265, 279-81, 292; visits sanatorium, 255; visits first line trenches, 262-4; visits General Moșoiu, 269-71; optimism of, 274-5, 286-7; and illness of Nicolas, 275-9, 282-283; and peace with Germany, 276-7; receives telegram from George V, 285; and plans for leaving Roumania, 288, 290-1, 293-4, 300-301; and suggestion of armistice, 292, 294-5, 297; and meeting of Allies, 299-300; message from British Government to, 303; her writing, 305; and decorations for doctors, 306-7; silver wedding of, 310-12; and treating for peace, 318, 328; receives new ministers, 326; despair of, 326, 334, 339, 341, 350; France honours, 327-8, 432; and conditions of peace, 333-337, 339, 349, 365-6, 375; Allies take leave of, 338-45; and peasants, 360-1, 372, 380-383, 385, 393, 395, 398-400, 404, 408-9, 411, 431-2; and Marghiloman Government, 365, 390-3, 410-11; attends Requiem for soldiers, 372-3; at Bicaz, 392 *et seq.*; and death of Emperor Nicolas, 394-5; and site for dream house, 396-7; name day of, 400; visits monasteries, 401, 413; Hungarian article about, 404; great grief of, 414-15; and Mos Cerbu, 419-22; and opening of Dardanelles, 425-426; and "Greater Roumania," 429, 439; reception of, in Jassy, 432-3; and ministers, 434-5; enters Bucarest, 436-8, 440, 442-5; and deputations from Transylvania and Bucovina, 439; visits cemetery, 440-1
- Marincovitch, 212
- Marshal, Colonel, 161, 187, 343
- Maruzi, Princess Marie, 133
- Mărzescu, Dr., 103, 173, 228
- Masaryk, Professor, 258
- Massar, Dr., 261
- Mavrodi, Madame Hélène, 22, 163-165, 168, 212, 252, 254, 256; and tour through Moldavia, 77; injured in car accident, 79; at Câmpu-Lung, 83
- Metropolitan, the, 309; and refugees, 94, 192
- Michael, Grand Duke, of Russia, 151-2
- Michailovitch, Grand Duke George, 107, 133, 138; in Roumania, 109, 111, 132
- Mignon, *see* Marie, Princess
- Mihai, Madame Radu, 322
- Mills, Mr., 254
- Milne, Miss Leila, 36, 199, 228, 282, 422; and Mircea's illness, 71; and author's birthday, 260; visits Sœur Pucci, 285; and children's canteen, 292; leaves Roumania, 299
- Mircea, Prince, of Roumania, 88, 136, 161, 187, 293, 305, 373-4, 425-7; character of, 23; author and, 65, 121, 267, 445-6; illness of, 67, 69-76, 259; death of, 76, 80, 85, 89, 99, 113, 179, 211, 260-1, 291, 344; grave of, 88, 94, 185, 306; and

Mircea, Prince, of Roumania
(*cont.*):

National Day, 189-90; anniversary of death of, 303

Mircea Hospital, 81, 221, 228, 284

Mișu, M., 347-8, 416, 429; at Bicaz, 395, 397; author and, 401

Mogosoia, 44, 85, 200, 443

Moldavia, 29, 95; author's tour through, 77, 158; retreat of Roumanian Army into, 92

Moore, Miss, 278

Moruzi, Colonel, 123

Moruzi, George, 247

Moruzi, Princess Marie, 200

Moșanoia, 242, 272, 379

Moscow, 315, 395

Moșoiu, General, 272, 315, 358, 360, 378; author and, 268-271; present to author from, 282

Mossoloff, General, 152; author and, 95, 96, 113, 117, 118, 129

Munich, 220

N

Napier, H. D., 37

National Coalition Government, 104-5

Nauen, 339

Neamtz, 216

Negroponte, 360

Nenitescu, 328

Nevruze Khan, Mde., 74-5, 228-9, 284-5

Nicolai, 249

Nicolaita, 306, 309, 325

Nicolaivitch, Grand Duke Nicolas, 151

Nicolas, Emperor of Russia, 95, 101, 105, 112, 123, 138, 217, 220, 327; and author, 25; author writes to, 30; facsimile letter from, 32-5; letters from author to, 65-6, 104, 111;

Grand Duchess Kyrill and, 110; feeling for, in Russia, 131; suggested visit from Ferdinand to, 148; abdication of, 151-3, 171; letter from, to Ferdinand, 153-4; sent to Tobolsk, 227; and Dmitry Pavlovitch, 281; portrait of, 324; in Siberia, 390; murder of, 394-5

Nicolas, Prince, of Roumania, 80, 82, 113, 129-30, 206, 228, 237, 283, 390-1, 423, 425, 427; and tutor, 67; and Mircea's illness, 72, 161; and air-raid at Buftea, 81; and flight to Jassy, 91, 92; his name day, 105-6; visits hospitals, 119, 230; in Jassy, 121; and convalescents, 191; and author, 205, 376; at Cotăfănești, 238, 242; illness of, 244-6, 275-9, 282-3, 286; at Macsut, 251; at English Legation, 303; Nini and, 304; at English Mission, 339; visits battlefields, 405; rides with author, 413; and entry into Bucarest, 443-4

Nicolescu, Madame, 302

Nini, nurse, 304, 370, 384, 419; and tour through Moldavia, 77

Nish, 418

Norton-Griffiths, 135

Notara, 120, 314

O

Ocna, 217

Odessa, 118, 130, 213, 368; food from, 282

Odobescu, Goey, 296-7

Oituzi, 217-18, 229, 360

Oldenburg, Prince, 124

Olga, Grand Duchess, of Russia, 137, 283

Oltenia, 82, 85
 Onești, 127, 178, 234-5, 247, 358,
 360; author at, 262, 369, 370
 Oteteșanu, Pauline, 240

P

Paget, General Arthur, 25-6, 37
 Paget, Lady Muriel, 293
 Palestine, 415, 419
 Palianowsky, Count, 39
 Panaiteșcu, Professor, 245, 247,
 257-8; and author, 288, 298,
 419; and author's writing,
 297, 330; and Christmas
 calendar, 308
 Pantazi, Captain, 362
 Papiniu, Mr., 328
 Paris, 259, 272, 424; bombard-
 ment of, 353
 Paris, Captain, 242
 Pașcani, 199-200
 Pau, General, 37
 Păunești, 265, 313
 Pavlovitch, Dmitry, 117-18, 283;
 exile of, 281
 Perkins, Dr., 257, 284
 Persia, 193, 281
 Perticari, Ellen, 337
 Perticari, Hélène, 253, 374
 Perticari, Ioana, 251
 Petala, General, 265, 313; and
 author, 82-3, 388
 Peters, Landrat, 39
 Petersburg, *see* Petrograd
 Petrachi, 230
 Petrograd, 31, 39, 116, 118, 129,
 138, 283, 315; Carol in, 123;
 revolution in, 150-1
 Philippopolis, 37 *n.*
 Piatra, 216, 231-2, 255-6, 290, 418,
 432
 Pitesti, 84, 95
 Plagino, 324
 Plagino, Colette, 240-1
 Poklevski, 94, 213, 427
 Polisu, M., 251
 Polisu, Madame, 251

Poltava, 110
 Popovici, Mihai, 432
 Popp, Dr., 253
 Popp, Madame, 156; and station
triage, 253; organizes
 "refuge," 315
 Portocala, General, 208
 Pralea, 269
 Prezan, General, 125, 137, 146, 147,
 333; at Comanesti, 78; ability
 of, 96-7; promotion of, 100;
 author and, 104, 167, 231, 340,
 434; Ferdinand decorates,
 312; and possibility of mobili-
 zation, 403; and return of
 author to Bucarest, 443
 Prezan, Madame, 168
 Procopiu, Madame Irène, 22, 113,
 193, 227; author and, 274
 Prodan, General, 113
 Propican, 292
 Protopopoff, 151
 Pruncu, Mlle., 215
 Pruth, the, 30, 203; Roumania's
 frontiers along, 28-9
 Psychas, M., 104
 Psychas, Madame, 104
 Pucci, Sœur, 93, 147, 161, 242, 441;
 leaves for Odessa, 213; at
 Cotofănești, 262, 267, 276;
 author visits, 285; illness of,
 319; death of, 347, 350, 353-
 355
 Purichkevich, 113

R

Raben, Gretchen von, 216
 Racovița, 143, 145
 Radoslavov, Mr., 37
 Rafaila, 135
 Ragosa, General, 232; arrest of,
 289; Ferdinand decorates,
 298
 Râmnic, 62
 Rasputin, 113; murder of, 117-18,
 281, 283; Empress Alexandra
 and, 151-2

- Ratchitch, 285
 Rattigan, Mr., 251
 Rattigan, Mrs., 217, 251
 Regina Maria, motor school, 99;
 ambulances, 134-5, 219, 225,
 261, 272, 388; organizations,
 175, 237, 268, 393; hospitals,
 178, 188, 223-5, 240, 262;
 mission, 246
 Reindre, Pierre, 246-7, 272; takes
 leave of author, 343
 Reverchon, Dr., 268
 Rigaud, 245-6
 Rivali, 113
 Rochefort, Comte de, 249, 343
 Romalo, Dr., 137, 276, 278
 Romalo, Nindi, 285
 Roman, 103, 128, 172; author at,
 77, 173, 228, 283-5; Russian
 soldiers at, 175; arrest of
 Russian staff in, 289
 Rossetti, Colonel Radu, 164, 168,
 182, 422, 431; severe wound
 of, 230; and author's birth-
 day, 260; and entry into
 Bucarest, 440, 443
 Rossetti, Theodor, opposition of,
 to Allies, 53
 Rostoff, 213
 Roumania, 64, 109, 160, 179, 191,
 254, 257, 305, 359, 383;
 author and, 3, 9-11; neu-
 trality of, 4, 28-9; and Allies,
 8, 10, 31, 294-5; and Central
 Powers, 8, 10; Franz Ferdi-
 nand and, 9; and death of
 King Carol, 16; and France,
 25, 50; nights of, 25, 33, 430;
 and England, 27, 28, 38, 303,
 422; and Germany, 27, 53;
 and Russia, 27, 29, 31, 36, 53,
 268, 365; and Bulgaria, 37;
 entry of, into war, 49 *et seq.*,
 54; suggestion to withdraw
 Russian troops from, 148;
 beauty of, 220; heat in, 224;
 Russia declares armistice in,
 289; Wilson and, 314; women
 of, and peace conditions, 337;
 fate of, 338; conditions of
 peace accepted by, 339;
 French soldiers leave, 342-3;
 and Allies, 349, 387; and
 Bessarabia, 361-3; Robert de
 Flers and, 436; victory of,
 445
 Roumania, Greater, 429, 439, 442
 Ruginești, 398
 Ruginoasa, 199-200
 Rujinski, Colonel, 180, 262
 Russia, 22, 36, 104, 110, 117, 118,
 129, 162, 167, 186, 193, 199,
 203, 257, 264, 427, 436, 438;
 and Roumania, 27-9, 31, 35,
 50, 56, 100, 151, 208, 356, 441;
 Roumania's frontier against,
 29; and Roumania's claims to
 Transylvania, etc., 33-4; pris-
 oners in, 39, 197; and Dar-
 danelles, 53; plan for author
 to go to, 112, 137-8; evacua-
 tion into, 118-19, 213-14;
 Carol visits, 118-19; Bratianu
 goes to, 118-19, 183; situa-
 tion in, 130, 181, 187, 227,
 238-9, 246-7, 261, 299, 319;
 suggested visit of Ferdinand
 to, 148; revolution in, 150-2,
 167, 267, 365; provisions
 from, 157; threat of, 203-
 204; important events ex-
 pected in, 205; German ad-
 vance in, 206; rumours about,
 210; disorder on railways in,
 252; General Jancovescu's
 impressions of, 259; alarm-
 ing news from, 265, 306;
 and peace with Germany,
 276; author plans journey
 through, 277, 293; Bol-
 sheviks in, 289; declares
 armistice, 289-90; downfall
 of, 298; and Germany, 317;
 end of war in, 325; disruption
 of, 327, 362; news of Tsar
 from, 390

Russki, 151
Rustuk, 422

S

- St.-Aulaire, M. de, 216, 434; author and, 256-7, 320; and Coanda Government, 428; decorates author, 432
- Salcea, 159-60
- Salonica, 191, 294, 422, 436
- San Francisco, 215
- Santoni, Dr., 441
- Sarrail, General, 50
- Săscut, 242
- Sassonov, 33, 35-6
- Scroviste Peris, 55, 72
- Semlin, 28
- Serbia, 57, 186, 314; Roumania as ally of, 50; Allies in, 419
- Siberia, 254, 363, 390
- Sigmaringen, 303
- Simky, *see* Lahovary, Simone
- Sinaia, 23, 95, 96; death of King Carol at, 15; Carmen Sylva at, 20; author at, 52; Kaiser at, 249
- Siret, River, 221, 223, 320
- Slatineanu, 131
- Sofia, 36, 417, 419
- Sophie, Queen of Greece, 39
- Soutzo, Lise, 216, 231-2, 234, 388; author at house of, 255
- Spain, 135
- Stafka, 110, 147, 151; murder of Duhonin in, 289
- Staicovitch, Dr., 132, 206
- Stânca, 251, 376
- Stance, 381
- Statulescu, General, 236
- Stefan, 381
- Stefanescu, Madame, 408-9
- Steinbach, 89, 374
- Steinboch, General, 254
- Stephanești, 208, 279
- Stere, 328, 362
- Stirbey, Catherine, 206, 213-15
- Stirbey, Marie, 424
- Stirbey, Prince Barbo, 7-8, 85, 97-99, 123, 150, 167, 171, 182, 246, 288, 306, 334, 351, 408, 416, 422-3, 425, 429, 431; sends messages to author, 9, 52, 92, 401; at Buftea, 43, 89; and author's hospital, 55; and Washburn, 65; and death of Mircea, 76; and air-raids at Buftea, 81; and flight from Buftea, 86; takes house in Jassy, 90; and King, 104; and coalition government, 108, 197; brings bad news, 115, 214, 325, 403; and plan for author to visit Tsar, 116; author's talks with, 142, 146, 247, 274-5, 290, 300-1, 340-1, 397, 417, 422; rides with author, 161; and agrarian question, 163, 170; head of Crown Domains, 195; and Russian retreat, 207-8; and plans for evacuation into Russia, 215; and news of French victory, 259; and author's birthday, 260; and news from Russia, 267-8; and possibility of Russian peace with Germany, 276; and author's car, 283; and plan to leave Jassy, 286; and author's silver wedding, 310; and telegram to George V, 315; and Grigorescu's promotion, 321; and Czernin, 332; Germans and, 367; and feeding of poor, 393; and Marghiloman Government, 410; and Bolshevism, 427; and Coanda Government, 428; character of, 430; faithful service of, 433; attacks on, 436
- Stirbey, Princess Nadëjde, 44, 85; and air-raid at Buftea, 81; with author, on train, 90, 92; at Brancovan Hospital, 227

Stoica, 245, 258
 Sturdza, Colonel Alexander, 138-9
 Sturdza, Demètre, 138
 Sturdza, Olga, 94, 252-3
 Surikoff, General, 246
 Sușita, River, 271
 Sweden, Crown Prince of, 332
 Sylva, Carmen, *see* Elisabeth,
 Queen of Roumania

T

Tanescu, Colonel, 156
 Tarcău, 393-4
 Targu Neamțu, 393, 409
 Targu Ocna, 234, 243, 356, 358,
 405, 407; author at, 78; des-
 truction of, 262
 Tcherbacheff, General, 231, 246;
 anxiety of, 268, 285; and
 Entente Ministers, 289; de-
 clares armistice, 290; and
 Bolsheviks, 300-1
 Tecuci, 220-1, 258, 320, 350, 360
 Temesvar, Banat of, 28, 34
 Tereshenko, 267
 Tetcani, 77-8
 "The Country that I Love," 161,
 181, 187
 Theiss, River, 28-30
 Theodoroiu, Catherine, 106
 Thomas, Albert, 191-5
 Thomson, General, 100, 191
 Tîbanești, 184
 Tiflis, 438
 Timoc, 28, 30
 Titulescu, M., 210
 Titulescu, Madame, 210
 Tobolsk, 227
 Tooes, Mr., 320
 Transylvania, Roumania and, 26,
 28, 50; Russia and Rou-
 mania's claims to, 33; Filip-
 escu and, 43; Roumanian
 advance into, 55; German
 troops in, 60; union of, with
 Roumania, 438-9
 Trepoff, 118

Trotsky, 235
 Trotuș, River, 78, 179, 224, 238,
 251, 269, 383
 Tsarskoe, 150-1, 395
 Turkey, 37 *n.*, 416, 419; and de-
 fence of Dardanelles, 28; and
 Roumania, 332; overthrow
 of Government in, 418
 Turtucaia, 56, 67
 Tutova, 109, 323

U

Ugarov, Count, 390
 Ukraina, 325
 United States, 135, 167, 183, 254
 Ural, the, 438

V

Vaitoianu, General, 224, 234, 357,
 359-60, 378; and author, 262,
 272, 300, 308, 353, 419; Fer-
 dinand decorates, 310; in
 cabinet, 428
 Vaitoianu, Madame, 246
 Vaitoianu, Sylvia, 265
 Valea Babei, 271
 Văleanu, General, 241
 Vănatori, 279
 Vartejanu, 258; brother of, 220, 227
 Vasili, 306, 309, 325
 Vaslui, 283
 Vaudescale, Dr., 249
 Vaudescale, Anne Marie, 213, 262,
 276
 Vaux, Dr. de, 343
 Ventura, Mlle., 339; and author's
 birthday, 260; performance
 for prisoners, 276
 Verblunski, General, 347, 355
 Vescan, Ion, 432
 Veuillet, Dr., 249
 Vidin, 422
 Vienna, 54, 303, 334
 Villa Greerul, 160-1, 162, 167, 183;
 author at, 285; Dr. Clunet
 buried at, 441
 Vladimir, Grand Duchess, 30-1, 39

Voinești, 168, 170, 187
Vopika, M., 320, 434

W

Walton, Captain, 288
Washburn, 63, 65, 117
William II, Emperor of Germany,
and Ferdinand, 25, 440; wires
to Queen of Greece, 39; in
Roumania, 249; abdication of,
431, 433; leaves Germany, 435
Wilson, President Woodrow, 314;
and peace, 417; Germany
and, 424; and Roumania, 430

Woevre, 104
Woodfield, nurse, 23, 189, 260
Wrangel, General, 134

Y

Yusupoff, M., 117, 283

Z

Zadic, General, 359
Zaharoff, General, 105, 109, 147-8
Zimnicea, 85, 159
Zorleni, 99, 104, 109, 147; author
at, 122-3

